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XIII

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FREEDOM
NOVEL

Kuro no Maou

Volume 14 - A Witch Never Loves

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Chapter 210 - Feelings of Sacrificial Maiden

(POV—Fiona)

「Please cut me」

From the moment I said those words, my consciousness become unsteady as if watching a dream.

「Huh?」

Kurono-san, making an idiotic surprised expression, was cute.

「Just as it sounds, please cut me with your hatchet」

Even without repeating the words many times, Kurono-san would know the intention behind those words.

If the current hatchet cannot cut it, then it is better to evolve it.

Fortunately『Cursed Grudge Hatchet「HaraRetsu」』had sucked the blood of numerous crusaders and monster, it also had sipped, though somewhat only, the blood of 8th Apostle.

The evolution only needs a last spurt of blood, it was obvious from the theory of cursed weapons.

「——Then it should evolve」

The things I am saying and what I will be doing is only natural by remembering the opponent in front of us, this would turn into a plan to recover our position in battle, there is nothing strange in this.

A tact for Adventurers for passing through dangerous situation is serious battle with life on line.

However, my consciousness is dreamy, heart is beating faster, there is heat residing in the core of my body.

Just why, how is this happening? This isn't the time and place to feel like this.

Though I understand that, this hazy feeling of sinking in sweet dreams doesn't stop, it is irresistible.

Hot, my body feels hot, I have stripped the witch robe and am just wearing underwear, still the night wind doesn't help in cooling down the hot body.

No, though a witch, but I too am a girl of marriageable age, so by showing my naked body to a man it is only natural to feel embarrassed—really?

Kurono-san is not watching Lily-san, but me, only me.

Different from the time of festival, that time it was only slightly embarrassing.

But why is it so much right now—

「Are you serious, Fiona?」

「Yes, I offer my body to Kurono-san」

I'm happy.

Kurono-san is watching me, needing me, right now, not even Lily-san, but I'm helping Kurono-san the most.

Why do I end up thinking, why am I feeling so happy about that?

More than Lily-san, I did an ugly comparison, still why do I feel such a dark joy?

With, arousal and excitement and self-hatred, the positive and negative feelings mixing with my heart, my consciousness becomes faint like a muddled lava.

「It's the only way to defeat that, hurry」

Am I speaking correctly right now.

I'm scared if I blurted out something strange.

So fast, cut me Kurono-san, with those hands, make me a sacrifice, make my everything your own.

「Sorry Fiona.....And Thanks」

My consciousness almost blew—due to too much pleasure.

I was prepared for the pain and suffering from the strike of cursed blade, but as if it all turned futile, useless, worthless, a wave of climax shakes my whole body.

Before I noticed it, I was lying on the grasses upside-down while gasping.

The diagonal slash injury should have reached quite deep, but, without even feeling any sort of pain, I only feel feverish.

I didn't feel any pain, rather amazing pleasure. Maybe I should question why is the feeling I get so different from by getting cut by blade, but right now I'm too much lethargic and tired, that I don't even want to move my head, and,

「.....with I can cut that guy into pieces」

The fact that the hatchet evolved and I helped Kurono-san, wrapped me with the feeling of satisfaction, and I doze off on the comfortable bed of grass.

Apparently, it took not only blood, but also lots of magical power.

However, I'm fine with that right now.

「Leave the rest to me, and rest」

Kurono-san said that to me.

Kurono-san gently applied the『Fairies' Miracle Drug』, to which I send my drowsy intoxicated eyes to him.

「Yes.....please.....」

The fire-like crimson and hell-like black eyes of Kurono-san, looked directly in my golden eyes filled with lust.

His eyes looking at me, his comrade, with complete trust felt comfortable, that I thought selfish things like wanting to keep staring him for eternity.

He abruptly turned away his eyes, which led me to feel loneliness, at the same time, a black robe covered my body.

Kurono-san gently wrapped me in the robe, which seemed like a hallucination of Kurono-san embracing me, and my body, once again, got hot.

Completely unaware of my reactions, Kurono-san shouldered the evolved hatchet and face his back to me.

「Then I will be going」

Kurono-san took a step, turned into a black gale, and disappeared.

With my dim consciousness, while sniffing Kurono-san's scent from the robe, I watched his fight to the end.

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「S-So embarrassing.....」

I was not sane at that time, I calmly thought that while watching the bonfire.

Particularly, after I changed the turn with Kurono-san, became alone, and was secretly changing my wet underwear, my heart was about to break with emptiness and self-hatred.

I have never thought it was good to cast a powerful telepathy protect before now, if I hadn't done that, Lily-san might have read my embarrassing thoughts.

If she found out that, in that sort of situation, I hold those—sort of feelings for Kurono-san, then at worst, I would be fired from Element Master.

According to Lily-san, romantic relationships are banned within the party, even the oblivious-me knows the meaning behind those words.

To me, Kurono-san is, a precious comrade, party member and leader. Just that much.

Even if Lily-san and Kurono-san become a couple, no, married couple, I should be blessing them, as a comrade.

That's why, I have no intention to hinder feelings of Lily-san, neither do I have any intention to break the rule of love ban.

However recently, I've felt that determination shaking many times.

No, this is certainly my imagination, that's how it is.

Chasing after Kurono-san with my eyes, getting sad and glad with his words, too is my imagination.

I have not even felt jealous seeing Kurono-san talking happily with that beautiful elf receptionist.

「.....Embarrassing」

Those are the feelings a lovestruck-maiden should have for her yearned person, these are not some feelings me, a witch, should have.

A witch never loves, who said these words, this might show the preparedness of mind of a witch in pursuit of magic, but these words are completely appropriate for the current me.

At that time, it was the delusions because I got scared and aroused and high because I was cornered by a monster in a while.

No, it in itself might be the curse of hatchet, after all there are sentiments of a twisted lovestruck girl residing in the blade, so there is more than enough possibility that the curse led me to feel like 'that'.

Anyway, I don't think anything about Kurono-san, after sealing these embarrassing feelings in the depths of my heart, there won't be next time they are revived.

The moment I finally regained my rational mind, I heard the sound and sensed the presence of someone coming out of tent.

Not even one hour had passed since I changed the turns with Kurono-san, but looks like he is already awake.

On the other hand Lily-san is still sound asleep——Ah, this means that, from now, I will be together with Kurono-san, right.

「Just too much embarrassing」

The third murmur of 'embarrassing'.

No, there is no need to feel embarrassed, Kurono-san and I are normal comrades, party members.

While persuading myself saying that, I cannot help but feel my heart beating faster.

Ah, Kurono-san is coming out of tent, calm down, will my cheeks redden strangely, will I break out into a grin.....I'm anxious, but I look towards his way with my intentional poker-face.

「Good Morning, Kurono-san」

Chapter 211 - The First Divine Protection (1)

Black and wide, that was the first impression that came up.

It felt like standing in dark night, but for some strange reason I couldn't feel the darkness, upon surveying the surroundings I could see.

「Where is this place.....」

There were round pillars lined up in right and left, there were also delicate ornaments lined everywhere, it seemed like a shrine,

「Welcome to Avalon Imperial Castle of Elrod Empire. I truly welcome you Kurono Mao」

But, thanks to that voice, I understood that here was a throne room.

There is only one person currently who would call me by my full name 'Kurono Mao', in other words, the self-proclaimed god, ancient demon king, Mia Elrod.

Mia, with the same figure as in my memories as that of a person with androgynous face, was sitting in a big profound jet black throne.

Looking more carefully, she was wearing the same black uniform and ever-spreading mantle, the same things she wore when we first met.

I, from a place on the lower steps of stairs, asked Mia.

「Just what does this mean?」

I don't get the situation at all.

After Wrath-Pun escaped, we decided to camp at some proper place for a night, then I changed the turns with Fiona and slipped in my sleeping bag. Till here is clearly in my memories.

「You don't have to be that vigilant, here is inside a dream」

It feels just too real for a dream.

Even without pinching my cheek, I can understand that my five senses are working, magical power and sixth sense too for some reason.

「Appearing in dreams is more like a god, right?」

「Well, indeed」

Setting aside the fact whether it is god-ish or not, saying this throne room in front of me, is an illusion or a dream is more easier to accept than to accept it exists in reality.

Let alone, I was present in the Galahad Mountains the moment before. This has more persuasive power compared to saying that I got summoned 'again' to somewhere.

「So, for you to come out in dreams, what is the business?」

「Fufufu, that is, for giving you the divine protection as a reward for breaking through the first trial!」

You did it, congratulations! The words of congratulations and clapping from Majestic Emperor personally, resounded in the vast throne room.

「Ha, Ha, Thank you for that」

Although I somewhat predicted it, but upon being praised this much straightforwardly, I sure am bewildered to a great extent.

Or rather, at the time of getting divine protection, do all have to go through this?

This neither has the feeling of nervousness nor happiness, which I certainly felt when I got my graduation certificate in middle school.

「Though it is divine protection, it is not that much of great power, yet」

Well, that's true.

Certainly Wrath-Pun was strong foe, but fights with life on stake, is an experience many adventurers have gone through.

I never had thought that I would get tremendous power to defeat an apostle by just experiencing a situation like this for once.

「So, if I keep on completing the trials in order, the power of divine protection will increase?」

「That's right! Though I cannot explain in much details」

Like that, Mia stopped for a beat, changed her expression to a serious one and continued her words.

「Come on, Kurono Mao, present the proof that you overcome the trial」

「Proof?」

「That thing you have in your hand」

Looking down, before I knew it, I was holding a fist-sized deep red jewel in my left hand.

I thought it was『Queen Beryl』for an instant, but because this was blazing wildly and also had different hue, I understood this is different stuff.

In fact, this is,

「Is this the thing stuffed in right-hand of Wrath-Pun?」

「Yeah, if you just show the proof the trial will be completed, it is not necessary to actually kill the monsters」

I see, so the jewel stuffed on the back of left-hand of Wrath-Pun was the proof for this trial, so if I just get this in my hands, the trial will be deemed as completed.

However, if the proof is head of monsters or heart, then I need to kill them with certainty, and if I, by mistake, smash them into fragments then.....ugh, need to pay more attention from now on.

「Then I will take that proof, the『Fist of Wrath』」

Mia held out her autumn red palm, the jewel slipped from my hand like sand and while emitting bright red light, it disappeared in empty space.

Without even having time to admire the fantastical change, the jewel called『Fist of Wrath』vanished.

So...with this I have given in to god?

「By the way, it has lots of magical power inside, so if used in as a material for weapon or item, you could get a really strong one, or if you sell it, you can get lots of money」

「Eh, you say that now!?!」

What an extremely regrettable thing I did because of you, You sadist!

「Fufufu, this is the payback for the rude thing you said about me before, that you didn't understand whether I am a man or woman」

Grrr, being a god you still hold grudges.....

「Well then, with this the power of divine protection is in your body」

Though you say that, I don't feel any change, don't tell me I am being deceived by this fraud?

「So you mean to say I can use divine protection stuff now?」

How the hell do you even use the 'power of divine protection'?

「You will understand it with instincts, the same way as you learnt magic, and though it is called divine protection, it's power is now yours, Kurono Mao」

Of course, you will be able to use it after waking up from this dream, she added on.

「I see.....so.....should I say thank you here?」

However, is it fine to recognise this child in front of me as a real-god from now on.

Do I have to amend my wordings, after all he/she/it is the ancient demon king whom everyone on Pandora Continent knows about.

「Fufu, don't become so tense, you be like you have been till now, I don't want admiration and offerings, unlike the prideful『White God』」

The moment Mia said the name of god which the Cross Religion prays to, I felt a tremendous intimidation coming out of Mia.

Though there is neither bloodlust, nor magical power included, but a strange power indeed is coming out of the body, that makes me want to bow my head down unintentionally.

Though a part god-like power are coming out, but now that the name of White God has come out, then I have no choice but to ask.

「Do you know about『White God』, Mia?」

Before I knew it, the mysterious intimidation was gone, and Mia opened her mouth while smiling.

「I do know, but, that is a secret, for now」

「So you will tell if I complete the trials?」

「Just a little」

Apparently, there seems to be no intention for telling the info of White God.

Sadist, or rather, it might because of rules.

Well fine, the problem currently is not『White God』itself, but the crusaders who believe that bastard.

If only I can get the power to defeat the apostles and innumerable crusaders, I don't have to give a shit about God's problems.

「That's right, I will tell one thing」

「What is it?」(Kurono)

「The reason Wrath-Pun appeared was me?」(Kurono)

Because I was there to take the trial from Mia, that the Wrath-Pun appeared, no, more precisely it was 'made' for me. That's what I meant.

「No, there is no relation, the reason it appeared was complete coincidence, it's a part of how nature works. Like I said before, the God cannot interfere too much with the world, this works for all other gods too, we all cannot twist the fates」

「I'm relieved to hear that」

With this it seems like, there won't be a time when super-powerful monster appears for me to complete trial, and goes onto a killing rampage.

So, the monsters for trial, needed to be searched by myself, or I will meet them due to destiny.

「So can you tell me what the next trial will be, as a bonus you see?」

「Though you know the answer yourself. But, when you use divine protection after waking up, you will get the gist of what power of divine protection you will

get and also what the future trials will be about」

Unexpectedly, Mia gave me a hint.

Special service, no, there must be something else behind it.

「The talk is over with this, see you later Kurono Mao, I will wait for you to complete the next trial」

Before I could say something, my whole vision became black, like that my consciousness drifted——

Chapter 212 - The First Divine Protection (2)

I woke up only to find myself inside the tent.

On my side, Lily, in her small form, is sleeping while making *suusuu*, lovely sleeping breathing sounds.

There is the presence of a single person right outside, Fiona has been doing the night watch.

「.....Dream, eh」

With somewhat absent-minded head, I mutter that.

But, I soon deny the words in my heart. Meeting with Mia in a black throne room, I remember that very clearly as if it occurred just right now. In that case, I will be able to use 'power of divine protection' now. However, let's get outside first, if the power turns out to be explosion type, it would be a catastrophic.

Without waking up Lily, I swiftly get out of tent,

「Good Morning, Kurono-san」

With sun of dawn at her back, Fiona does a morning greeting. Of course, she wasn't in her underwear form, but her normal witch clothes.

「Yeah, morning」

Her white body had been vividly ingrained in my brain, I, feeling embarrassed, try to greet like normally. I intentionally turn away my eyes from Fiona and survey the surroundings.

The morning sun illuminated the surroundings, the traces of fight last night are clearly visible. By setting up tent in this vacant land, we were able to pass the night and take rest too.

Either chasing the Wrath-Pun or going down the mountain, both cannot be done unless the sun is up.

「Are you still injured?」

I cannot keep on ignoring Fiona all the time, so I bring up a safe topic.

「Eh, Yes.....It is fine, now.....」

But, the person who showed unexpected reaction was Fiona, for some reason she blushed and turned away. For some reason, no, I get it, after all the person who must have felt embarrassed upon being stared in underwear form was Fiona.

Wait, or rather, I even watched her embarrassing form and cut her—— c, cut her, does the injury lead to that, responsibility, etc cetera!?

「I, I see, it's good if you're fine」

While letting a stream of cold sweat running inside my mind, I was only able to return those safe words, truly, I am a good-for-nothing. Well, I wouldn't let Fiona do the night guard, even if it has only been an hour since we changed the turns.

Though I cut deep, but as expected of miracle drug, it healed the injury as if it didn't exist, now just if her lost blood is recovered, she would return to her normal healthy condition.

That's right, there should be no injury left.

「Fiona, thanks, if not for your cleverness, we would've been annihilated」

「At that time, I did what I could have」

She returned to her sleepy expression, and said as if it wasn't much of a thing. Hum, looks like the thing about injury was just me being paranoiac.

Setting it aside, as for my true feelings,

「But, people don't say 'cut me' so easily, yet you said it means you trust me that much, thinking that, I'm, that, happy」

It surely, isn't my conceit, if she didn't trust me she wouldn't have even said that.

「No, I am too am happy for being helpful to Kurono-san」

Fiona smiled saying that, the reason I wasn't able to look straight in her eyes, was not only the bright sun behind her.

Her smile was more fascinating compared to normal girl of marriageable age, seeing that I felt startled. Her golden eyes looking a bit feverish and excited, is

certainly my imagination.

「Ah, that's right, because we defeated that guy, I am now able to use the power of divine protection」

Though it might be too much forced and obvious, but as to forget the presence of suspicious Fiona, I opened up a new topic.

「Divine Protection, is it? Now that I think, you did say it might be a trial」

Though normally if I tell that I met god in dreams and got hand over the divine protection, they will think I went insane, but I frankly tell everything to Fiona, who knows the situation from before.

I tell her about the things that happened in the dream quite vaguely,

「I see, conversing with god in dreams is a common phenomenon」

And she easily accepted it.

In this world with magic, the phenomena of getting oracles via dreams also exists.

「The jewel has gone from the right hand of Wrath-Pun, so it must be true」

I took out the only loot, the right hand of Wrath-Pun from the『Shadow Gate』 only to find the crimson jewel on the back of its hand gone spotlessly.

Mia said, it would fetch me a high price.....well whatever, what's lost is lost.

Let's pray that the other parts of right hand, the fur, bones and stuff become good materials.

「So, what is the power of divine protection you received, Kurono-san」

「I will be checking it right now」

I'm looking forward to it, Fiona said that with an expressionless face saying she's not so much looking forward to it, well this is normal, she truly might be looking forward to it. Fiona's expression doesn't change but her feelings are truly great, my prediction when I first met her was not wrong.

「Well then, here I go——」

While Fiona looked over me from back, I increase my concentration in the

same when I use black magic. According to Mia, the power of divine protection is now a part of my power, so there's no way I wouldn't be able to understand it.

「——This eh」

Sure enough, I was able to grasp that feeling pretty fast.

That was the feeling I hadn't felt till now, an unknown power. However, it is a part of my own power, I could use the same way I use black magical power that is present within my body. No, this is made with black magical power as the source, it would be better to say that it's nature changed and it『Materialised』in my body.

And I know about this 'power'.

「『Black Flames』」

I hold out my right arm, and blazing jet-black flames rise out of my palm. My right hand, now covered in black flames from the tip of finger to shoulders, resemble the Wrath-Pun from last night.

No, in truth, I am able to control these black flames made from black magical energy, just like Wrath-Pun.

「Err, let's go with Fireball」

With the newly gained flame of different nature, I immediately mix the magic and logic to control and use it. The structure of magic sequence is simple, after all I just need to make it into ball and throw it, the feeling is almost same to Bullet Arts. Like that, just like I imagined it, the cluster of spherical compressed black flames, completed its formation in my right hand.

I fire it in air, though not with same speed of Bullet Arts, it flew with considerable speed leaving a black trace and exploded in mid-air.

「Whoa, I can finally make my black magic go boom!」

I won't let Fiona say「It is plain」anymore!!

Confirming my victory, I face Fiona standing behind me.

「How was it Fiona」

「Err, you have become able to make flames from black magical power」

That's right. It's not like, without the divine protection, the black magical power cannot make flames. The first person I killed, that young boy, was using flames without any divine protection. Till now I hadn't been able to use different attributes with my magical power, but looks like this divine protection covers up for those lost parts.

「So you can only make flames?」

「Eh, Ah.....that is, right」

What, being able to create flames alone is not great!?

「Can you create lightning?」

「No, lightning is impossible」

「I see now——」

Fiona looks at me as if looking at some pitiable child.

In fact, wait, the way this talk is going feels to me like.....

「It is really plain, though being a power of divine protection」

I, at that time, thought that I need to complete the next trial as fast as possible, and strengthen my divine protection.

Chapter 213 - We are the, son of (omitted)

Wilhart Tristan Spada

Though I got the divine protection, leaving Wrath-Pun alone is a danger, even without the jewel, the materials of a rank 5 monster would fetch whopping amounts of money.

Now that there is a way to defeat it, I have no intention of leaving it alone.

Like that, instead of descending the mountains, we decided to pursue Wrath-Pun.....but, couldn't find any traces of it.

We didn't had magic or skill for pursuing a monster, neither had the information about its nest or movement route, so the result can be said as natural.

With somewhat disappointment we returned to Dakia Village, there we found some party made by elite cadets called as『Wing Road』had subjugated Wrath-Pun, hearing all that information the disappointment only got more profound.

Truly, lucky bastards, Wrath-Pun had lost its biggest weapon, the right hand, and was also terribly exhausted, in that situation even a normal rank 4 party would have defeated it.

However, letting the prey run, and have your kill stealed, is a normal thing for adventurers.

Let's give up being depressed thinking that I was unlucky that Wrath-Pun escaped, and they were lucky to have met it in that condition.

With this and that, on 11th day of Red Flame month, we returned to Spada with the right hand of Wrath-Pun as the only loot.

Thinking back, we finished our rank 2 quest for capturing Doltos, the hatchet evolved, got divine protection, all in all the harvest to not less.

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Next day, 12th day of Red Flame month.

Lily's wings were half-torn off by Wrath-Pun, the injury is yet to heal, so till the time it doesn't heal, the adventurer work has been put on hold.

We still have some quests left for reaching rank 3, for the time being the quests with deadline coming near have been completed, so there would be no problem in reaching rank 3 even if we rest for another one or two weeks.

Though Lily is feeling no pain thanks to miracle drug, but it will take time for the lost part to regrow completely.

However, it wouldn't take more than a week.

The wings are composed of magical power, so even without using heal on it, they would regrow on their own, like the tail of lizard, on the other hand, the five limbs and other physical parts, just like human, wouldn't regrow.

In that sense, the fact that limbs weren't torn off can only be said a blessing in disguise.

However, the figure of Lily without her half right upper wing, though she herself is not paying much attention to it, but it sure is not good on my mental health, I earnestly pray for her to recover fast.

In somewhat overprotective momentum, after making Lily rest in the bed of inn, I started preparing for next quests, and so I am trying to do what I can do right now.

Incidentally, I had thought of enrolling Royal Spada Academy, so I thought to take the enrollment application beforehand. On the noon of 12th day of the month, I once again passes through the splendid big entrance gate.

People are, as usual, just too much, today too it is crowded with students.

En route, I noticed many students talking about「Wing Road reached rank 5」topic.

Apparently, by defeating Wrath-Pun, they had raised to Rank 5.

For, the hard-working honest『Element Master』it is a really not good thing,

even more when the talk about Wrath-Pun's subjugation comes in.

I will tell the complete details to Simon, let's do that, the moment I started walking thinking that,

「Huh, are you perhaps——」

A slender tall youth entered my vision, wearing black uniform with symbol of elite cadets, the red mantle, fluttering over it.

Having red hair as if blazing brightly, sensitiveness filled face, golden eyes, with a monocle over one eye.

His expression was too much depressed one, but no doubt about it, he's the guy who was being chased by Wrath-Pun.

Though it was only for a short while we said words to each other, so he might not remember my face, but seeing him fine, I got happy and instinctively called out to him.

「Eh?」

Reacting to my voice, youth raised his head up.

「You're really that student who was attacked by Wrath-Pun at that time, right?」

If I got the wrong person it would be just too embarrassing, so let's confirm first.

Or rather, he looked at me with shocked expression, as if he saw someone who he thought had died, he stared fixedly at me from the top of head to the tip of feet.

What, did I really got the wrong person?

The moment I had that anxiety,

「Nightmare Berserker!?!」

「Eh, what? Berserker?」

What the hell is that embarrassing name, I hadn't called myself that ever, right?

Is he thinking of me as someone else?

「Woooooo, you were alive!!」

But, judging from this manner of speaking, looks like he didn't got the wrong person.

I see, he thought I was K.I.A'ed when fighting Wrath-Pun, well it was rank 5 monster, and I really got near killed, so his prediction is not completely invalid.

However, with this reaction, I don't know how to reply.....

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With this and that, after we congratulated about the well-being of each other, we self-introduced ourselves.

However, it would be good to say that I was underestimating the existence called elite cadets.

After all,

「We are the son of『Sword King』Leonhart——」

Let's skip a bit.

「——That's right! We are Wilhart Tristan Spada!!」

That's right, in human words, he's the son of king of this city-state called Spada, in more simple words, he's a prince.

Near the benches set on the outdoors of Academy, I met with a real prince.

「Ha, ha.....」

However, meeting a royalty at first, having a fierce self-introduction, though didn't ruin the mood, but it did make me go blank in mind.

Or rather, if I did something bad, wouldn't I be executed for lese majeste?

「Fuhahahaha, what, don't you worry Nightmare Berserker Kurono, you are my life savior, why would I need to accuse you for a false crime——」

No, no! Prince Wilhart repeats the words two times.

I kept on lending an ear to his roundabout formal figurative speech, apparently he wanted me to talk to him in informal way because we were both 'adventurers'.

「Err, so should I call you Wil?」

「Umu, it's good like that」

Wil nods with somewhat happiness, is this the so called dignity of royalty? I think it's different.

「Well then, sorry to pour water on our destined and heart-moving reunion, but I should say this before, no, I should apologize」

「Apologize, about what?」

Wilhart suddenly stood in attention, then moved down forming a right angle, and bowed his head.

What happened suddenly, he's a prince, right? Is it alright to easily bow his head to some adventurer?

「Though being the 2nd Prince of Spada, I, currently, don't have the appropriate gold or treasured item for my life savior! Truly Sorry!!」

I immediately understood he was apologizing me, but it took me some seconds to understand for what he was apologizing to me.

「Err, do you mean you cannot give me reward though being a prince, right?」

「Indeed! Though I am the prince of Spada, the fact that I'm a single student in academy is also an unwaverable truth. If I was the crown prince like my brother, I could have given you treasures of gold and silver, also the prestige and medals, but.....I am only an elite cadet, without the fortune or status to give」

In other words, he wants to give me large amounts of reward money and medal, but the current him doesn't has the status to do that.

I see, though being a prince, he can't do each and everything with his authority.

No, there might be places where it is possible, but in Spada, without the

proper social status and all, the authority and assets don't follow.

Something like, the son of a rich person doesn't has much money, sort of.

「No, I never thought to take something after saving you, so the feelings of thanks are enough」

「No, but.....however.....」

「First, raise up your head」

I cannot bring myself to let him keep the perfect right-angled pose forever, it would be same if it wasn't a prince but someone else.

With some reluctance, Wil raised his head up with a bitter expression on it.

「Don't worry about it too much, it would happen as long as we are adventurers, just this time the person I saved was the prince」

If I had saved some child from village, then I would've gotten his/her treasured item like, the empty shell of a cicada.

Things like this don't need something like that in return, these are done with good intentions and grateful feelings are more than enough rewards, but demanding for something in return can only be called as a vice act.

This time, I was at most just depressed on having Wrath-Pun escaped, I hadn't expected anything in return from these whom I saved.

「For me, it's more than enough if I can save someone」

It's not some lip service, but the true feelings from the bottom of my heart.

If I want something in return for my good intentions, it would be words of gratefulness and not some gem.

「I'm grateful for your consideration, Ku.....If I was the King of Spada, then I would've appointed you as a knight」

「Ah, no, I'm seriously fine so don't say that.....」

Not like I am aiming to be a knight, and will never become in one.

I do like my current adventurer lifestyle, if I got into a court service like knight, then at time when a monster for trial appears I won't be able to go defeat it due

to my workload.

In the first place, someone like me with a flawlessly confidential identity of this world become a knight, at most I might be hired as a mercenary.

「What, do you don't even want status and prestige, you seriously resemble a freedom loving adventurer!」

Wil's word of praise hurt my ears, sorry, but the reason is not something that splendid.....

But amending it again and again would be inelegant, right, what don't dare to think that I think explaining it would be tiresome, it certainly is not like that.

「Understood, I will respect your intention, I won't do something excessive, but, if you want my power, I will do my best to help!」

「Ah, Thanks」

I'm thankful for you to say that, looks like Wil possess strong sense of duty.

「However Kurono, can you tell me one thing」

「What is it?」

His expression becomes serious, no, it was already serious with all the theatre play like behaviour, but currently serious expression went over one notch.

That Wil asked me,

「You're still a rank 2 adventurer, but, haven't you repelled that dreadful Wrath-Pun, and even cut off its right arm」

For the time being, I tried to tell Wil on how I repelled Wrath-Pun, by cutting our hard parts like cutting Fiona, et cetera.

「Nightmare Berserker Kurono, just what are you?」

Oh right, I first need to tell this prince, that I certainly am not that Nightmare Berserker.

Chapter 214 - Berserker x Alchemist x Prince

In early afternoon on 12th day of Red Flame month, Simon had finished his lunch, as usual alone, in his room.

Moderately resting after meal, the time he thought for secluding in laboratory, the room of door was knocked.

「Oi Simon, you in there?」

That voice was, without a doubt, of Kurono.

This building was a storage-shed-like place, but long ago, though small, it was used as a dormitory.

However, only Simon uses this place, thanks to her sister, furthermore there was no supervisor, so any person, not only Kurono, can enter from the entranceway.

During daytime only his room and laboratory were locked, so it was natural for the visitors, only Kurono, to knock the door.

Though it was a visit without appointment, Simon opened the door gleefully as though he was waiting for Kurono.

「Hi, Onii-san, so you came from Dakia already——」

Simon, who knew about Kurono's quest, said those words, but seeing Kurono with an unexpected being present, his body went stiff with the eyes opened wide.

「Eh, huh, is he.....」

He stared at the person standing beside Kurono.

A slender elite cadet with red hair and golden eyes, considerably well-ordered, but there wasn't something conspicuous in particular.

Still Simon, even without having any relationship with people in school, knew about him.

「Prince Wilhart!？」

To Simon who guessed his name and status correctly, Wilhart took a bold pose by folding his arms and replied.

「Fuahahahaha, indeed, we are the son of——」

「Ah, I became friends with Wil just before, so I thought that we shall talk together, was it a bother?」

Hearing Kurono's words that seemed like 'My friend is with me, so can we talk together? ', Simon took an even bigger shock.

(Eh, what are you saying Onii-san, he is from royalty, and you're even calling him by a nickname Wil, how can you be so frank if you met him just before!?)

He wanted to ask lots of things, but he didn't want to give bad treatment to a person from royalty, though a student, so Simon while trembling with fear,

「No, not like I hate it.....well, umm, how about coming in first?」

Invited third prince, who for some reason appeared with Kurono, inside his room.

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. .
.

Simon's room, which seemed to be originally a double room, had three men sitting on floor facing each other.

「Fumu, We too have heard your name, Simon Friedrich Bardiel, but it is more famous as legendary man, rather than a person from 4 great nobles」

With the tea given by Simon in one hand, Wilhart said as such.

「Legendary man?」

Just by hearing, Simon blushed, turned away and didn't even tried to reply.

「Kurono, you came to Spada just now, so it's natural that you don't know, actually Simon——」

Though it was a roundabout tone again, but Kurono lend an ear to Wil, who told carefully and politely, hearing all that Kurono learned the details as to why

Simon was called the legendary man.

Since the start of Royal Spada Academy, he is the only person who got perfect scores in written examinations and a great zero in practical examination, furthermore it continued for three whole years.

「Simon.....」

The results of examination, were just like as Simon told before, a failure, so it was hard for him to praise him saying he was a genius to gain perfect scores in written examination.

Rather, when Kurono tried to think about the figure of Simon trying hard to use a martial skill he can't use under the watch of many people, he couldn't help but feel sad.

「I don't want to talk about that」

「No, sorry」

Having said that to with a pained expression, he could only agree to it.

「However, this is truly mysterious, Kurono, who says he's just a normal adventurer, and the legendary man Simon, are this much intimate friends」

「No, well Simon too is an adventurer, and many other things?」

「Eh, Yeah, that's right, many other things had happened!」

Kurono was told by guild to not make this case of massacre public.

Of course, it wasn't like they would be arrested by Spada army immediately, but it was an information which would definitely increase the anxiety and panic in the hearts of Spada's population, so Kurono and Simon both were restraining themselves.

But however,

「Fumu, it wouldn't be good to make light of us, with our power, we can understand any matter as if we had seen it with our eyes, that's right, with the help of this Secret Network. In other words, we had already known about the fact that you both are 'survivors of Alsace」

Wilhart hit the bullseye about the circumstances of Simon and Kurono.

「.....Why do you know about it?」

「Just a simple deduction」

What the heck is secret network, nobody tried to retort this.

「——You said just before that you came from Daedalus, and, I have heard from rumours that Simon, during temporary leave, went to Daedalus. Furthermore, this information is surely confidential, but I have heard about a group of adventurers fighting in Alsace village in Daedalus against an army called Crusaders」

Apparently, this prince Wilhart knew considerable amount of information, Kurono grasped that.

Indeed, if he knew about the matter of Alsace, then it would be easy to guess that Kurono came from Daedalus and had participated in the emergency quest.

「I read the report, made by the testimony of surviving adventurers, about the fight in Alsace village, it seemed just too much absurd and nonsensical, so I thought it was a complete exaggeration, but——」

There, Wil used his index finger to fix his monocle, then continued.

「——Kurono, if you say had gone through all that, then I cannot say those are absurd nonsensical things」

The people who know the fight of Alsace, except the crusaders, were only 4 people.

Some hundred or so adventurers, fought against an army reaching thousands in numbers, dealt great losses to them, and fought a fierce battle, this sure can be said an absurd nonsensical story.

Let alone, Kurono and『Element Master』, even Simon were only rank 1 adventurers at that time, so it was only natural that their testimony was doubtful.

Even so the reason they didn't conclude it as a lie was maybe because they gave face to Simon and his family, Bardiel.

At the same time, the messenger sent by Adventurers' Guild, and Spada army had known about the internal affairs of Daedalus, so they knew that battle of

Alsace 'existed'.

However, Wilhart had seen the true strength of Kurono before his very own eyes, when he was cornered in a dire situation by a rank 5 situation.

No, he had only seen him fight against goblins, but thinking about the situation when he would've fought the Wrath-Pun his strength becomes obvious, and there was even more no reason to doubt after seeing the cut off arm of Wrath-Pun.

「We have increased vigilance starting from Spada fort in Galahad, for fighting against the mysterious army called Crusaders which destroyed Daedalus, however——」

Turning over his red mantle, Wilhart said.

「I still cannot get rid of this bad feeling, crusaders just suddenly appeared, we don't know about their internal affairs, in others it's an unknown enemy. However they don't accept your information, you, who have experienced a fight against them, just because you are of low rank. There I think this, that the hero who saved me from my dilemma, you, Nightmare Berserker Kurono, I have seen your power and have no reason to doubt it. At least, I, Wilhart Tristan Spada will believe you」

「In other words, Wil you want to know the fight with crusaders in more details?」

Indeed! You guessed right, Wilhart shouts with a satisfied expression.

Kurono hesitated a little bit.

The incident of Alsace was not something to be told to someone wanting to know out of curiosity.

However, Wilhart is one of those who knows somewhat information about crusaders, and feels danger regarding them.

And more than anything, he is the second prince of Spada, if things went right, then vigilance can be increased.

That was something that Kurono, even after raising his ranks, would not be able to do.

「Alright」

In the end, Kurono gave his answer.

The time he hesitated was about the time it takes to drink tea in a breath.

Is Simon fine with it? He sent a stare asking the question, but it seemed like he understood the advantages Kurono had thought, the only problem would be on emotional levels for Kurono.

No, it might be more painful for Simon, who lost his beloved Susu.

「I get it, I will listen with caution!」

And Kurono spilled it, about how adventurers repelled the army called crusaders in a countryside village called Alsace, and also how those adventurers were killed.

Chapter 215 - Lily's Route

One month was about to pass since staying in『Cat's Tail』inn.

Of course, during quests they don't stay in the inn, but it doesn't change the fact that they had stayed here the most since coming to Spada, one could say they had gotten used to it.

In one of the rooms of that inn, which was almost like their own house,

「Muu-」

Lily, wearing White Punpun robe as her sleepwear, was on her bed, sullen.

She had even put on the long-rabbit-eared hood, if she lied face-down, she would seem like a child of white Punpun.

No, there were cuts in the back to let her wings come out of it, so even if she lie face-down, one could understand she is a fairy, there might be no idiot to think of her as a Punpun subspecies which grew wings.

Incidentally, wearing a fur robe in the middle of summer would feel very hot, and fairies are magical creatures who live naked all the years. Not accepting the effects by change in temperature is a characteristic of magical creatures, so of course even half-human half-demon Lily has those characteristics.

Besides Lily, wearing cartoon-character costumes, sat Fiona on a chair.

She wasn't in her usual witch form, but was wearing thin black shirt and smooth dragon-leather hotpants, her appearance can be said quite rough or rather her underwear form.

Because Kurono wasn't here, neither she had any intention to go out, so she was revealing her white skin.

「Boorriing~」

Lily, without paying any attention to Fiona's sensational appearance, complained about boredom.

From her young sullen appearance, she would seem like a child, but she had

returned to her adult form.

Lily was strictly ordered by Kurono for waiting inside the room for the regeneration of her wings, though she accepted the order, but things to do on bed are limited if not sleeping.

Hence, complaining about boredom can be said as the most natural result.

As a result, Fiona said words gently, it was unknown whether she said it for Lily or not.

「Lily-san, I need some consultation」

「Consultation? For dinner?」

Lily looked at Fiona with suspicious looking eyes, the eyes on the hood imitating a Punpun's head too seemed to be glaring at her.

「No, it's not about that, in fact, it might not be something so big to be called as consultation」

「That's quite some evasive manner of speaking, well I have lots of time, so I don't mind talking about anything」

Though Lily and Fiona were females, but they both didn't prefer to talk much.

It may be either because of their natural character, or maybe because they were brought up in an environment without much interaction with other people, or it can be both reasons.

But, Lily and Fiona had relaxed their guarded long before, and now liked to have fun while chatting with each other.

The start of their friendship relation, goes back to the time when they both worked hard in the potion making in Alsace Village.

The reluctance in talking with Fiona, who could be said as her comrade and second friend in her life, had long gone for Lily.

Lily casually lend her ear to Fiona's words, along with the big rabbit ears extending from her head.

「We are weak against enemies with heat resistance, right?」

「.....This is more than enough to be said as a serious consultation」

Lily had thought if she didn't want to talk about dinner then it might be about the lunch they ate before, but Fiona's words crumbled Lily's predictions.

「I had been a solo adventurer, so I had dealt with various enemies with resistance to fire, but a monster with that much resistance was a first for me too」

「There were not many powerful monster in fairy garden, so I too can't be said well-experienced」

Both, who were born and raised in this world, understand their power which they had grown up with more betterly compared to Kurono, who was given non-human power all of a sudden.

It is an obvious truth that they both have sufficient power to go around as a first-class adventurer.

However, they didn't want to live as adventurer in correspondence to their current powers, but they wanted power to fight with rank 5 monsters on daily basis.

That's right, not only Kurono, but these two also needed power.

At the very least, Lily and Fiona, both had no intention of leaving『Element Master』, even Kurono was aware of this fact.

「Shouldn't we both also try to think?」

「For becoming strong? Yes. Kurono will become more strong from now on, he had also gotten the divine protection of demon king, no, even if he hadn't gotten it, he would've got more stronger」

That's right, Fiona threw in agreeing words.

They weren't saying this just because they were intimate with Kurono.

Fiona knew about the fact that while preparing interception tactics in Alsace village, Kurono was improving his『Anchor Hand』and『Shadow Gate』at tremendous speed.

Raising the effects of magic a person is using cannot be said an easy thing to do, though Fiona had no way of knowing what sort of magic theory was inside Kurono's mind, but she understood that his black magic still had too much of a

room for improvement.

Just like Lily said, even without divine protection, he would become more stronger in some other way.

「Adventurers have an absolute rule of making party with similarly strong people, right?」

Fiona nodded.

For example『Vulcan Powered』, in that party only Vulcan was Rank 4 the rest were rank 3 adventurers, however they were rank 3 only in saying, in truth they had enough ability to fight along with Vulcan, that's why the party continued to exist.

Naturally, in the case of nobles playing adventurer-esque game, there is no restriction like that, and they cannot be called 'proper' adventurer.

To unleash maximum power as a party, and defeating monsters of higher rank with incredible teamwork, can only be possible on having members with suitable power.

With hindrances, let alone showing more power, they wouldn't be able to even show their normal power, and taking a weak member in party is totally avoided as adventurers risk their lives.

That applies the same to『Element Master』too.

Kurono thinks of both as precious comrades, and Lily and Fiona too had constructed a relationship of mutual trust, with differences in degree of trust.

But『Element Master』was not a friend group but an adventurer party, if in future there happens to be a change in power relationships within the party, and they happen to not be able to fight along with Kurono, then they would have to leave the party.

And the kind yet strict Kurono, would agree their withdrawal from party.

「I definitely don't like not being near Kurono, not being helpful to him, doing that is more painful than dying」

Lily, without hiding anything, speaks out her intentions.

「I.....too hate it. I finally got a comrade I can trust, so I don't want to be away from him」

Lily was not able to clearly read the emotions filled in Fiona's words.

Conversely speaking, her words were spoken in a condition she had protected her true intentions, which even Lily cannot read through telepathy.

Lily didn't knew what she was hiding, and was having a not-so-good premonition, but for the time being she set it aside.

「Well, this time the opponent was rank 5 monster, had high fire resistance, so it can't be helped we had hard time against it——」

In other words, if it was rank 5 monster on which light and fire worked, they could've defeated it easily.

「——But, certainly there is that 'something' needed to fill in that weak point」

「Yeah, after all we would definitely have to fight against Apostles」

Defeating an apostle?

If someone in Republic heard it, they would either laugh scornfully saying「As if you can do that」or get angry saying「How many soldiers do you want to sacrifice?」

Fiona was also one of the people who gave same reaction, but since being a part of Element Master, she has to be determined to fight against apostles.

Being in Element Master, fighting along with Kurono, both meant that.

「There is no proof that apostles would definitely come when crusaders come here, but, it sure is a problem when we don't know how much time we have left」

「Then let's expect more of Spada Army, they might buy enough time for Kurono-san to get complete divine protection and for us to gain more power」

In truth, there wasn't any means to know the movements of crusaders, so thinking about this can be said useless.

In that case there was no other way than to find a solution as fast as possible and become stronger, without paying attention to the time remaining.

At the very least Kurono, thinking that, challenged the trials of Demon King

Mia Elrod which who knows when will end.

「Although, what should be do actually?」

Most probably Lily must be the one racking her brain the most.

After all, she had always used her extra magic till now, she had no route to learn powerful magic like other mages.

Fiona, used model magic, so she had made a goal to learn all the high-class magic of all attributes except Fire, Light and Darkness.

「Well then——」

However, Fiona point out an answer to Lily, quite easily.

「How about using weapons?」

「.....Weapons?」

Lily showed an expression of surprise and agreement as if saying she never got that idea, miraculously the head of robe too showed a surprised expression.

「It had been bothering me from before, but Lily-san has no class, right?」

Reflexively Lily took out her guild card and stared at it.

There normal information like『Rank: 2』『Name: Lily』『Class: Fairy』were inscribed.

After all this time, Lily, for the first time, thought it was wrong to state race name as class.

This guild card was made in Irz village, when she was in her child form, so there was no doubt that she stated fairy without thinking anything.

She felt hate and embarrassment to her old-self, by killing her feelings,

「You want me to become a witch?」

She chose to move on with the talk.

「I won't say only witch, but after setting up a class, get a weapon suitable for that class, how about this?」

However, equipping a single magic staff, won't be much of help to Lily who was already using the power of『Queen Beryl』

「But, that's right.....a weapon I can use, no, if I can learn other magic, then I would have magic of different system from extra magic and my power would surely increase」

The more she thought the more possibilities she found.

「We would go to school after reaching rank 3, so how about learning there, you might get some new idea too」

「Indeed, I was only thinking of spending a fun school life with Kurono——」

Lily, had read many romance-based books with school as their stage, those books were left by the mage in the hut, in fact, Lily also held a secret admiration for places known as schools. (TN: Anyone remembers him/her, I seriously think that mage got something to do with Kurono)

She wouldn't go there alone, but with her beloved man going with her, her expectations were increased for absolutely no reason.

It was unfortunate that all romance novels that mage left about bonding between men. (TN: &%(#%&@%&@#)*&%) (EN: that mage is female.... damn yaoi &\$/ \$#%& how were they called; fujoshi or something.....)

「——Right on, I would find the perfect class for myself」

「By the way, Lily-san, which class would you like to become?」

「That's right, how about Necromancer」

「I see, it sure is a surprise」

Fiona, who didn't understood Lily's fairy joke, the next moment tried to curry favor from Lily, who had now returned to her child form with a sullen mood.

Chapter 216 - Stratos Smithing Workshop

I'm currently walking in the industry area near the academy with Simon-it's filled with smithing workshops. Simon's favorite store, Stratos Smithing Workshop, is our destination. It's a tiny workshop, but the owner of the shop, Stratos, is a blacksmith with abilities on par with the blacksmiths the royal family hires, or so Simon says.

Our purpose for coming here is to use the right arm of the Wrath-Pun as material for making a new item or weapon. It would have been fine to deliver it to the Guild, but Simon said to use it for myself because it is a rare material, so for the being I decided to see what he wanted to show me.

"It might be late evening before I return"

"That's because we talked for too long"

Our conversation with Wilhart, the third prince of Spada, started with things about the Alsace defensive battle, then became about the Spada Army, then guns, then black magic. The conversation kept on changing topics before it became a normal chat. While talking about those topics, I heard about serial murders conducted by a sword-wielding beastman. We didn't hear about this until now because a week before, we were in the Galahad Mountains completing our Doltos capturing quest.

The story of the serial murderer is that the murderer uses a longsword, he only attacks young women in the dead of night, and he kills everyone with just a single stroke, the murderer has physical strength and is thought to be a rank 4 adventurer. The progress of the investigation performed by the『Law Guardian』 is unknown, but from the information of a witness, the race of murderer is deemed to be a beast person.

The murderer is yet to be arrested, so caution is needed when going out at night.

"This area is populated, a perfect place to attack people, and really dangerous."

“But aren’t only young women being attacked?” (Simon)

“Mistaking the silhouette of Simon in night as a young girl is 50% possible”

(editor note: fufufufu)

“That.....”

Simon briefly tried to refute, but he sighed and nodded-perhaps he understood my words were not a joke but the truth.

“But if I’m with Onii-san, it’s fine”

“I’ve also got a new gun.” Simon says, swinging his new rifle on his shoulder.

Incidentally it’s called『Yatagarasu V.02』, its base form is the same as version 1 but important points we talked about earlier have been improved.

“But it could be an unexpectedly powerful enemy, it is said to be above rank 3, right?”

“Aren’t you worrying too much? There aren’t many people who can pick a fight with you, Onii-san”

I’m glad that he believes in me, but I wonder if I am I seriously worrying too much. I wonder if, after encountering out-of-norm existences like the Apostles several times, I’ve always been followed by a bad premonition of someone more powerful than me appearing in front of us.

But, because the murderer is a beast person, so neither can it be an Apostle, nor rank 5 monster, who would become the trials.

“In a time of emergency, use all your strength”

“Yeah”

While talking like that, the shop, our destination, came into view. It is a building made from reddish-brown bricks. And compared to other workshops we saw along the way, it really is small. But since it’s a workshop for forging iron, compared to common houses, it is a big building.

While thinking that the chimney part spouting out black and thick smoke must be the workshop, I hear the sound of Simon opening the door of the store.

“Yes, welcome.....oh, Simon-chan”

“Hello, Oba-san”

An old lady, with the width of a dwarf female, started a calm and mild conversation with Simon. She is sitting near the counter, but her height is somewhat smaller than Simon, considering the small height feature of dwarves, her height is average.

Her olive brown curly hair has been bound up behind her, her face has some wrinkles showing her age, and she is gently smiling. The smile is so warm it is probably not the smile of business, but a smile from her heart.

Well, this only shows that they have known each other for a long time since the contender gun he had at first and the『Yatagarasu V.02』he is equipped with right now were both made in this workshop.

“Oh, is that person perhaps.....”

The old lady pointed her gaze at me, from her reaction it seems like she has heard about me before.

“Nice to meet you, I’m Kurono, an adventurer”

“Ah, as expected, you are the so-called ‘Onii-san’ of Simon”

It may be my imagination, but for some reason, despite Her smile not being any different, I feel that there is some hidden meaning behind it.

After completing some talk with old lady she says,

“Okay then, wait for a bit and I’ll call him”

She disappeared towards the interior of shop, calling the owner of this Stratos Smithing Workshop, her husband. I didn’t come here to purchase a weapon, but to check if the right arm of Wrath-Pun could be used to make a weapon or item, and unless I hear it from the blacksmith himself, I’m not doing anything with it.

In my head I have the image of a stubborn, short-tempered & grim old man about a blacksmith dwarf. This is not just because of novels and movies from earth, but because the dwarf blacksmiths in this world are actually like that.

I talked with them in Alsace village, and during that the guild master Biin-san intermediated, so they listened to a rank 1 adventurer like me. Well, I’m

currently a normal rank 2 adventurer, not the leader of the emergency quest. If I said something bad, there is a possibility of getting yelled at like「Don't come here again!」

“I need to be very careful.” I thought to myself. While in thought, I looked around the store interior. In the somewhat narrow room, many types of weapons are exhibited. All are of simple shape, and thinking back, they are the same as the ones displayed on Mordred Weapon Company.

A sword with iron blade, spear and axe, all are weapons that novice adventurers can get hold of, there is no weapon with magic imbued in it. Wondering if this place is a subcontractor supplying weapons to Mordred Weapons Company, a single dwarf appears from inside the store.

“Yes yes, welcome! It's rare for a new customer to come here, so say whatever you want, and I will answer your questions as much as I can.”

A middle-aged male dwarf appears in front of me in a relatively modest attitude. His work clothes, blackened at some parts, showed the years of working. Looking at it, I can tell he is the blacksmith here. His height is average for a dwarf, and being a male he is slightly taller than the old lady.

“Ah, I didn't introduce myself, I'm Regin Stratos, a humble blacksmith, nice to meet you”

This dwarf named Regin, didn't have a long beard, which every other dwarf seems to have. If not for his physique and pointed ears, he would appear to be a short human male. With a hairstyle like that of a priest, drooping eyes wearing round glasses with black rim and a thick lens and gentle facial features along with thick eyebrows and big nose like that of a dwarf, he looks completely different from the stereotypical image of a grim dwarf.

To Regin, bowing in front of me while smiling I say,

“Ah, Yes, nice to meet you, I'm Kurono, an adventurer”

While being disappointed that my imagination was wrong, I, being a Japanese, reflexively returned the bow. No, well, this was quite an unexpected reaction, I thought it would be like「Who the hell is this baby rank 2 adventurer, don't you dare come here again!」

Well, if he is going to treat me friendly, there's no harm in that.

“Oji-san, we have something to ask today——”

Simon, the regular customer, intervened and explained the reason for our visit. This Regin person, not only manufactures weapons from iron and mithril, but also from monster materials containing magical power, so he might be able to make good use of the right arm of Wrath-Pun, or so Simon said, praising his abilities.

He showed an understanding expression with our brief description.

“Wrath-Pun. Now that's some old name, I still remember using it 20 years ago”

I'm surprised to hear that he has manufactured the materials of a very rare monster like Wrath-Pun. As expected of an expert blacksmith.

“But without the『Fist of Wrath』, manufacturing a single arm is insufficient”

“Eh~ no way~”

Though I won't raise a regretful voice like Simon, I am disappointed too. The right arm of Wrath-Pun is completely inside my『Shadow Gate』, so its condition is good, and using it as material for armor is no problem.

For making weapons from materials, they can be made either by using the materials as they are, like『Fang Sword『Evil Eater』』, or the materials can be fused with other metals using magic, called『drilling』.

I came here expecting the useful parts of the right arm being『drilled』to make a weapon which exhibits fire magic, but the jewel I offered to God Mia, has come to interfere as the bottleneck.

“I can use it to enhance an existing weapon, but, from the characteristics of Wrath-Pun, unless the weapon being enhanced has fire attributes, don't expect much effect out of it”

“Equipped with fire attribute means it has already become a magic weapon, right?”

Magic Weapons are pricey stuff, not suitable to get into the hands of a rank 2 adventurer. Yeah, I do have a cursed weapon, but never had a magic weapon containing power inside of i——

“Ah”

Then, I remember one weapon. That’s right, I almost forgot about it, but I’m holding a weapon containing fire magic inside it.

“How about『Thumb of Ifrit』?”

Taking it out from my bosom, I handed it towards Regin, a single knife. This is the『Thumb of Ifrit』, a multipurpose knife, that has been doing covert activity of being a knife, igniter and ‘insect repellent’, since I have again started my life as an adventurer in Spada.

But because I’ve been using it as a tool, I almost forgot it could be used as a weapon as well. Though the fire attribute is faint, but it does have the attribute, using this is a lot better than using a sword as a base. Now he just needs to agree on it.....

“Oh, the『Thumb of Ifrit』, eh, I see, using it will not harm the ‘fire power’ of Wrath-Pun, and it could easily be enhanced”

The thick lens of the black-rimmed glasses flashed and he gave affirmation. Alrighty then, it’s decided.

“Then, please enhance this『Thumb of Ifrit』”

Chapter 217 - Fiona's Spada Gourmet Tour

Round 3

Because I had her rest at the inn, Lily spent her day sleeping and wasn't able to sleep that night. I do feel sorry about it, because it was a needless worry. For the first 3 days, with her torn wings, she had been wandering around the Galahad Mountains.

Her condition is good enough that she can move around without much effort, so I don't have to worry. I should have let her do her normal things without doing something that would put any strain on her, but now it's TOO LATE! Lily fell asleep around dawn, and wouldn't wake up until dusk, so I left her to sleep.

"Sorry Lily"

Even now, during breakfast time, while Lily is sleeping soundly, I say my apologies to her. However, Lily in the White Punpun robe is deadly cute. If she likes my present, then I'm also glad. Thinking about it, we left Lily the Sleeping Beauty in the room and headed to the dining hall to eat breakfast.

"What should we do today?"

While exchanging morning greetings with Fiona, we sat at a table and talked about our plans. Fiona is not in her usual witch robe, instead wearing a black cape. I am in my casual outfit of a regular shirt and pants today as well.

"I have finished the important tasks yesterday"

Since we're not going for any quests, the other things we could do are all low priority. In short, it's our proper holiday.

"Let's see, a wand for black magic and armor—That we can do another time, today can be the development day for black magic."

The last time I had spent time devoted purely to working on black magic was in Irz Village. During the counterattack preparation in Alsace Village, I asked Mossan to teach me about model magic related to the darkness attribute, and because of that I had been able to strengthen『Shadow Gate』and『Anchor

Hand]]. Back then I was at my wits' end to improve it, however. The situation right now has become completely different.

“I also want to test out my divine protection power”

The power of changing the nature to flames is something that I cannot take out or ignore from the development process. The offensive abilities of my black magical power until now had been to materialize, enchant, or direct the firing of『Pile Bunker』, or use it as the source of my energy when using martial skills.

Though a variation of black magical power and not true fire, this new『Fire』attribute this creates the ability to use ‘heat’ and ‘explosion’, two new types of offensive power, on top of my black magic.

This is a major improvement. If it goes well, I might be able to recreate a rocket launcher or flamethrower. No, not might-I will make them. Even the fireball I make at a whim contains considerable explosive power. If I understand the power of this divine protection more, and create a more efficient magic sequence, it will certainly become an ability with great power for fights.

Come to think of it, Mia did say that after using the power from divine protection, I would get the gist of the future powers I would receive from trials. Then this probably means the divine protection is the power to gain magical power in attributes other than what I have now.

Wrath-Pun was a monster specializing in fire. In the case for another monster from a trial, if the monster specializes in water I would get the water attribute, lightning attribute for a monster specializing in lightning, and so forth, so I will be able to use other attributes with my black magic, or so I predict.

After completing all the trials, maybe I will be able to use every attribute magic and become a true Element Master. No, thinking of the origin of the attributes, they are pseudo-attributes, so maybe I would become “The Fake Element Master”.

“In other words, today is a holiday, right?”

“Ah, Yeah, there’s nothing urgent we need to do.”

I did think of a few things we could do, but in the end nothing was urgent.

“How about Fiona?”

“I don’t have anything to do, unlike Kurono-san”

A reply filled with boldness and no-shame came flying at me. Fiona hadn’t go out because of Lily. Her talking partner, Lily, is sleeping today. No wonder she is bored. It’s a good opportunity, how about I take her out to do some shopping, the moment I thought that, a flash flickered in my mind.

“That’s right Fiona, how about I give my gratitude to you?”

“Gratitude?”

Of course, it’s for letting『Absolute Grudge Hatchet「Kubidan」』evolve. In fact, rather than gratitude, I just want to pay Fiona in any way I can because she sacrificed her body.

“Let me treat you to food for today”

Though I said today, if her stomach got big, I will have to be prepared for it to become the “Spada Gourmet Tour” again. No, it will be fine, we also have the reward from Doltos capture quest, at worst the whole reward will go poof..... just that.....

“You don’t have to be that considerate”

I was convinced she would come biting my wallet, but contrary to my belief, her reaction wasn’t so fine. Fumu, so this is called reading too much into things.

“I see, so it was unnecessary at——”

“No, let’s go eat together”

Ah, so in the end you’re going. To Fiona’s frank attitude, I revealed a smile, though some bitterness might be mixed inside.

“You’re right, I’m sorry for Lily, but let’s go”

As I apologize to Lily in my heart, I realize that it’s going to be the first time Fiona and I go out alone. (editor note: daaaate)

“Just the two of us.....it’s the first time I will get out with Kurono-san, alone.”

Apparently, Fiona had the same thoughts I did.

“For the time being——Let’s meet up in the plaza during noon”

Of course, in front of that large obelisk with the exaggerated name 『Zero Chronicle』, Lily waited there before as well.

“Wouldn’t it be good if we left the inn together?”

“No, I remembered I have some unfinished work and want to finish that first”

“I see”, Fiona responded. Well, it’s not like I lied. Just like I gave the White Punpun Robe to Lily, I want to give a gift to Fiona too, so emergency business did come up. The only problem is if I can prepare the right gift by noon.

Well then, what shall I give to her.....

Chapter 218 - First Date (1)

I, Fiona Soleil, on the 13th of Red Flame month, am going on the first date of my life.

It's not like I have illicit love for Kurono-san, however I also don't have any reason to reject the invitation to the date, after all this is just him giving his gratitude.

He had some work to do, so after I sent him off, I ran back to my room, turned upside down the hat with dimension magic cast on it, and am inspecting the stuff inside.

「There is nothing black.....」

My personal belongings are enough for living as an adventurer; however, there is not even one thing that is appropriate for a pubescent girl going on a date in city to wear.

Even the spare clothes are for practical uses, though they all have defensive magic cast on them, but not even one has the effect of increasing the charm of a girl.

「This isn't good」

Even I am not an ignorant to the extent of wearing the usual witch robe on my date; I do have the common sense of wearing appropriate dresses when going on date.

However, to me, who had only been a bystander watching love affairs, doesn't know what the so-called 'appropriate dresses' are.

「Nothing's going to happen if I keep on worrying」

Fortunately, there is couple of hours before noon, our meeting time.

I even have money, in this Spada, there ought to be shops selling ornaments and clothes for dressing up a girl beautifully.

In that case, the story is simple; I just need to finish the preparations before the time of date.

At the same time I made that decision, I rushed out of the room.

「An apology in advance, I'm sorry Lily-san」

Though she won't hear them, but I still say those words to Lily-san sleeping the adjacent room.

This is not a date, and it definitely won't become doing this and that with Kurono-san, after all I have impure feelings, it's the truth, please believe me.

With feelings of guilt for leaving Lily-san behind, and anticipation of my first date , in my heart, I left that place at a quick pace.

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After passing through not so less expenses, I was able to get my hands on equipments that would help me accomplish my date quest perfectly.

My body is covered by a pitch-dark witch robe and a white blouse.

It would have been better with Valhalla Silk, which is beautiful and has defensive strength too, however, in the commoner's area; normal silk was a top-quality product.

The pleated skirt fastened by a belt, was chosen by me for having the same color as my hair, it's surely looking good on me, even the shopkeeper praised me.

From the knees to the down, there are not the usual black long boots, but white knee-socks and loafers.

Looking at my whole body, it might seem like school's uniform, but it's better for a novice in love like me to stick with safety rather than wearing eccentric clothes, this too is an opinion by the shopkeeper.

Furthermore, I had heard during my school days that men liked girls in uniform, so this time surely Kurono-san will feel lust while looking at my school uniform appearance.

While hoping for that to happen, I am standing near the meeting place, which is the obelisk in plaza.

In the night it changes into a deserted plaza, but in the morning, right now too, large crowds of people come and go from this place, as if showing the greatness of Spada.

While watching steadily at the crowds of people, I get startled every time I come across a male wearing black robe.

I feel my face somewhat heating up, surely it's because I have not wore a hat under this bright and clear sky.

I cannot wear that three-cornered hat in this outfit; my hard-work of this coordinated outfit would go to waste.

Because I don't have that hat, I have moved the necessary items to the handbag, which has got dimension cast on it and is slinging on my shoulder.

It shouldn't be that much out of place for the current me to hold this plain small bag, right?

「I might have come too fast」

I looked up in sky to find, the sun has still not crossed the meridians, at the time the sound of bell informing the noon time rang out in the whole Spada, which led me to think that I still have near an hour to wait.

Thinking logically, it would be the best to kill time while sitting on a bench under the shade of tree and eating fruits sold at the nearby stalls, however for some reason, my legs are not able to move from the meeting place, as if they have been petrified.

No, it's not that my legs are in the wrong, but the blame should go to my mind for thinking of not leaving this place.

Though understanding the fact, it couldn't become the reason for me to leave the place where I would meet Kurono-san.

While blankly staring at the flowing clouds, I stood there free from obstructive thoughts—not really, I was thinking about the things to do today.

Then after some minutes elapsed, suddenly, from the crowd of people passing by me, two people headed towards me.

Both of them are male, their outward appearance of Royal Spada Academy

was quite familiar in this area, not only that they wore red mantle too, so they must be those elite cadets Kurono-san told about.

「Hey you, hi there, I've haven't seen you before, are you visiting Spada for the first time?」

Smiling, the blonde male student stands in my way and springs up a conversation sounding too over-familiar.

Both of them have quite a bit of height, though not as much as Kurono-san, judging from their stature they might also have the power to swing the heavy weighted long sword too.

Both of them are quite handsome with their smiles too, but for a normal girl, having people taller than her standing in front of her, it would make her frightened.

Of course, for everyday-brawlers, i.e., adventurers, it is anything.

Incidentally, Kurono-san is more attractive and handsome than them, even the coercive pressure of having him stand in front of you isn't a joke.

「No」

While indirectly observing the two, I reply to the question with just one word.

This is, without a doubt, that picking up on girls' thing, right?

Due to 'an incident', no male student in Elision Magic Academy talked to me, but getting out in city, many have called out to me.

Naturally, to a witch like me, a man with no matter how much good face, is of no interest. I rejected politely all their invitations, or ignited a fire on their asses, I've been passing on like that by using those ladylike methods.

That being the case, I have not in the least intention of accepting their invitations, and there is even date with Kurono-san, a great event of my life, if they keep on with this act, even the gentle me will the increase the anger voltage.

「I see, ah, then are you a princess of some noble, coming here incognito? After all you are way too cute, and even have elegance, so am I right?」

The blonde male student, who first called out to me, spouts out bullshit of being mistaken.

「If it's fine with you we can guide you, look, we are from the Royal Spada Academy, so we're quite informed about this area」

Then, the other male student, with hair green, speaks out something that I not even asked for.

「No, It's fine like this, can you help yourselves to disappear?」

The frank me, just said everything in my mind upright.

The reason it might have sounded painful is only because I am feeling quite irritated.

「Ah, sorry, you have to that cautious, how about we do self-introductions first, I am—」

However, looks like this male student has got the brain of the level of monster, which cannot understand the words or feelings of people.

Why don't you understand, the one I long for is Kurono-san and not you.

「—Right, after hearing our names, you must've guessed it, yes we're nobles, so even if you're a princess we can be quite a good match」

「Or rather, it is easily understandable if you just see our red mantles」

While talking those things they both laugh, they are frighteningly offensive to the ear.

「Well, talking her while standing is somewhat odd, how about we go over there to the—」

As if trying to embrace my body starting from my shoulder, the hand of blondie stretched out rudely.

Hand of a man, other than Kurono-san is, truly

「Filthy and disgusting, can you please not touch me」

I took out「Custom Fire Ball」from the bag as if unsheathing a sword, and hit hard on the hand of the male student.

I want to commend myself for not actually charging it with magical power for a fire explosion, but rather controlling my anger.

「Ow—Oi Oi, isn't that reaction too rude and wrong?」

「Argh, you actually did it young lady, for raising hand on a noble, it can be execution in the worst case」

Although they didn't yelled like some hoodlum, but in the words of the two, there was surely anger inside.

‘Execution in the worst case’, around the time he said those words, their filthy ulterior motives were all exposed.

「Well, if you obediently admit your fault we won't make it a big issue, you just need to apologize for ‘one night’, that's all」

Seems like they don't know their standpoints currently, I don't care if they are some nobles or whatnot, but I'm an adventurer, if I want to escape then no one can catch me.

Furthermore, based on our strengths, me burning them both into charred black coal with my wand is faster than them unsheathing their「Mithril Sabre」, hanging from their waists.

「Same here, If you both are willing to disappear immediately, then I might leave you both」

「Ah, I see, if you are going to be in that attitude, then we too—」

They both start releasing dangerous air, however, now this has gone too far, they would become obedient if I give one right into their face.

Determining that, the moment I tried to load magical power into the wand,

「Oi, how about you stop around there only」

I heard that voice, reacting to it, I retracted my gaze to that area.

Standing there was, a man wearing apprentice magician robe.

I tried to think it was Kurono-san, but immediately reject it.

His height is not that tall, around the same height of these girl pickers, and his body is also slender, furthermore even the voice is different.

Who is this person?

Chapter 219 - The Daily Life of Saving Girls

(POV: NERO)

That monster with the odd name of Wrath-Pun, surely had the power of a rank 5 monster, though it was hurt, but it could've dangerous if I was alone against it.

Well, with all members of『Wing Road』, there's no way I can lose.

Though it took very long time and a harsh struggle to kill, but eventually we succeeded in the subjugation.

It was all good till here, but the problem comes later on.

Before I knew it, we guys reached to rank 5, and created the highest record of increasing rank by breaking the record of Prince Aisenhart.

Thanks to that we are treated as a hero-like existence within Spada, we have been called out to the royal castle and adventurers' guild too, saying it's for public acknowledgement or it's a congratulations party, truly bullshit events for me.

This is the worst, the peerless bothersome thing ever.

Well I dodged most of these events by making rational excuses, and left them to the show-off Charl and my ever-so-serious young sister.

With this and that, the shit things that came in the aftermath of reaching rank 5 were finished, but the people are still talking rumors.

Due to that, while walking in the city, I am wearing this shitty apprentice robe, hiding my face with hood and am sneaking here and there like a thief.

This is the reason why I hate standing out, I hate getting gazes of enviousness from fellow students, and even the encouragement from girls is irritating for me, why can't they all just leave me alone.

Darn, the origin of all this is Charl accepting the quest for subjugating Salamanders, and even that Wrath-Pun came out at that perfect shitty timing—forget it, nothing's going to change by complaining on my unluckiness.

Like that, the me, who is having hard time eating outside, tried to keep the sigh which almost seeped out from my mouth and was just about to cross by the obelisk present in the plaza.

「Ow—Oi Oi, isn't that reaction too rude and wrong?」

I shifted my gaze only to find, two familiar assholes and one truly beautiful girl.

The two boys talking about something are elite cadets who I've seen, though I've seen them, but I can't seem to remember their names.....well, who cares about the names of assholes.

But I'm able to remember the useless information that these two assholes work diligently over here to pick up girls everyday and have high success rate based on their looks.

However, I have no interest in the fate of the wanton girl who get picked up by them, I got nothing to do with them even if they make cozy with some girl somewhere/

But, sigh, this is bad, she even took out weapon and is showing hostility to them, based on the fact that they are some great nobles, it certain they would resort to violence.

Looking at the surroundings, I found everyone just looking from a distance, and not a single person who doesn't know the height of heavens came out to help the girl.

Well they are nobles, the only ones with power in this commoners' area to stop them would be the teachers or the same elite cadets.

Only at times like this the Law Guardians at patrol don't appear, they all are late to reach at the scene of crimes.

「Sigh」

The sigh I have been keeping in finally leaks out, seems like the God hates me very much.

But, it can't be helped, if I left such a beautiful girl on her own, my dreams will haunt me, and I've been through 'scenes' like this before too.

I too am a awfully good person, while mocking myself, I headed towards the

three.

「Oi, how about you stop around there only」

I call out to them, and the three looked towards me.

Even so, the girl is seriously pretty, to the level seen rarely even within the Academy.

She had light blue hair, and golden eyes like that of a shining sun, she is expressionless, no, because she is expressionless, she is able to bring out that mystical beauty.

Even her clothes are neat and tidy, unless noble girls who like to dress up just too much, and even her perfect body proportions coupled with her clothes seem somewhat appealing.

Ah, certainly, for such a beautiful girl, even the girl pickers and not-girl-pickers would call out to her.

「Huh? Why is a damn apprentice magician butting in our business?」

Whoops, I completely forgot about the hood hiding my face.

While revealing my face under the blazing sunlight, I politely ask them to leave for changing the situation without any fuss.

「Don't you bastards see the girl is feeling bad, just disappear already, rather, don't call out to a single girl with the two of you, the balance is just too off」

「Wha, you are!?!」

「Are you serious.....」

While completely ignoring my perfect pointing out of their wrong, the two start trembling upon knowing my identity.

Well I'm from the royalty, and my strength is far more than these two sleazebags, rank 5 ain't just for show.

「The great me will keep quiet about you failing to pick up a girl, so fucking disappear already」

「Wait a minute, stop with the strange misunderstanding」

「That's right, this girl was just too rude that we--」

「I said you to fucking disappear, by chance, are you deaf?」

While touching the scabbard of the katana fastened on my waist, I say with a light killing intent.

「I, I get it, so don't get too serious」

「Yeah, we will give you face, and make this matter irrelevant to us, okay」

Thanks to my negotiations with my whole heart in it, they both understood my intentions, certainly, talking is really important.

While thinking that, I saw off the two idiots who now had a pale face without any hint of blood.

「Sorry, a student from our Academy stirred up trouble for you」

For the time being, I apologize to the beautiful girl with light blue short-hair.

「Yes」

The word that came back was too cold, Truly, this girl is too much cold.

「Well, next time try to ask politely for them to leave, still, you're interesting to hit the nobles with the wand」

They are, even like that, students from elite course, not some people who would be beaten by some young girl who just learnt magic as a hobby.

Still is it right to say someone as reckless as her as interesting. The person in question, however, is still expressionless as if not understanding what I said to her.

「Well fine, I'm off now, ah, you don't have to thank me, and it's a normal thing for me」

Leaving without even naming myself might be rude, but because of my actions of revealing my face in crowd, the sounds of「Nero」and「Wing Road」is coming from the surroundings.

I don't want to bathe in the attentions of the crowd, or be encircled by them, or be chased by them, so the only left option, run away!

「Don't be too much of a tomboy, see ya later Young Girl」

I, once again, cover my face with hood, and left the place.

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(POV: FIONA)

「What was this farce.....」

With disgusted gaze, I sent off the boy with black and red eyes.

「There are too many unpleasant fellows in Spada」

The two playboys, and the boy who came in middle, his egoistic speech, I hate each and everything.

I was made to watch the drama called 'The Cheapness of the Three Men', really unfortunate.

「Please come fast and make me forget everything, Kurono-san」

Chapter 220 - First Date (2)

「Shit, I'm getting too much nervous now」

The reason I end up muttering something really timid is because of the present I bought for Fiona, which is a ring, quite an insinuating accessory.

The shopkeeper recommended it, and I bought it, but.....no, everything's fine, it's not some normal ring, it is an item helpful for adventurers, it's not like I have any ulterior motives.

Even so, while regretting to have bought something too much embarrassing, I move at a quick pace to the plaza, as the meeting time is nearing.

The sun would soon come near the meridian.

Things like clock are only nobles, so the meeting time is quite vague.

The commoners can only guess the vague time by hearing the bells of temple which ring at every two hours interval.

In truth, there is still thirty minutes left till the bell of noon, but it would be bad if Fiona was waiting for me since before, so it's obvious for me to reach there first.

Once I was told by my sister to "Never make a girl wait!"

It's not a date, but this date-like event is a first experience for me, while remembering the words of wisdom given to me by my sister long time ago, I determine myself to be a great escort for Fiona.

Well then, with this and that, I reached the plaza, in front of obelisk but,

「Hm, Fiona is still not here, huh」

I survey the surroundings, but I couldn't find a girl wearing that witch costume.

As expected, this place is filled with crowd of people during the day, but her figure can be easily distinguished even among this crowd with just a glance.

While thinking that, I stand in front of the obelisk, which has word of praise for that Mia-chan, and wait for Fiona's arrival while staring at the crowds of people.

「.....Um」

Suddenly, the edge of my apprentice robe is tugged, even though Lily is not here.

Just who is it, while thinking that I turn over and,

「Fiona.....is that you?」

Standing there was, Fiona, wearing white blouse and light blue skirt, a completely common person's clothes.

The reason, there was a question mark at the end of my sentence is because, her figure was completely different from the image of Fiona in my mind.

Just like my equipments, the witch-like, always wearing all black clothes, that Fiona.

However, currently she is wearing clothes of completely light hue, this gap is just too much.

「Err, is my appearance, strange?」

To Fiona saying something that sweet with a downcast look, I, unintentionally blushed.

「No, it's looking perfect on you」

I hate myself for saying that over-used line.

But, Fiona's casual wear of robe or cape, and doesn't reveal any of her body, it even concealed her bodyline.

Her this blouse and pleated skirt, resemble the summer uniform of a girl student, and it has the impact to completely annihilate her image of wearing boring witch costume.

From the half-sleeves of that blouse two white slender arms peek out, and from the miniskirt which barely reaches her knees, two bewitching legs are seen.

Her clothes are perfectly fit, and her body line is being seen, which seems more girl-like considering her real age.

Particularly, the belt of her sling handbag, is passing diagonally from between her blouse, resulting in twin peaks exerting pressure on the cloth of blouse,

telling its size, if Fiona is doing this intentionally, then I have to say that she is also a witch in seducing men.

「I see, I'm happy to hear that」

Fiona slightly smiled, seems like she hasn't noticed my impolite gaze, or maybe she is ignoring it, well either way thank you.

「Sorry, I'm always in apprentice robe, I should've wore some better for this occasion」

「No, the robe suits you Kurono-san」

No, it's not the problem of it suiting me or not, but.....No, if Fiona is not bothered by it, why should I, let's take on good will.

「However, Fiona also had common clothes like this, it was completely out of expectations for you to appear in this beautiful appearance」

「Eh, am.....Beautiful, is it」

「Yeah, truly」

「I-Is that so.....」

Saying that, Fiona; looked away.

Huh, did I just speaking something bad—or rather, this is strange, wasn't my remark just now way too embarrassing.

Why am I saying something with the nuance of「You're truly beautiful」as if natural, this going to be bad, if not a proper cover-up she might even complain on me for sexual harassment.

Don't tell me that there exists some punishment rule again harassing a girl in the guild or maybe, stopping my shitty idiotic thinking in middle, and I tried to change the subject, at least my rational reasoning told me that.

「T-That's right, Fiona, I got a present for you! If it's fine, can you accept it」

At that point, I took out the precious gift I bought just before.

「Eh, no way Kurono-san, it feels somewhat bad」

「Hey, before I bought the white robe for Lily, but there wasn't anything for

you though. Ah, is it by chance bothering you, right--」

「It's not like that, I want Kurono-san's present」

「I, I see, it's good that you are accepting it」

She interrupted me with great force, even I got back somewhat.

But, she might have thought to not waste my good will, Fiona does understand that much, albeit being a natural airhead.

The over-excited me, took out a dark blue case with the ring inside, from my pocket.

「Thank you for everything till now, Fiona, and let's work together from now on too」

「Yes, thank you very much, Kurono-san」

Is it alright to open it, to her question, I immediately nod.

Fiona's slender fingers open up the lid of case, inside it was the ring I just bought emitting the luster of a new article.

「『Athena Guard Ring』, this ring is embedded with the divine protection from a goddess named Athena, and protects the wearer from blades」

To put in simple words, it is a magic item similar to『Nana Blast Amulet』, which both Fiona and I possess.

Divine protection is similar to magic, based on uses it can be weapon or defenses, and could be embedded in ornaments; of course, the strength varies from best to worst.

At a glance this『Athena Guard Ring』might seem like a normal silver ring, but on the interior of the ring exists a magic circle written with ancient characters for activating the power of divine protection.

「Hearing the name it might sound like a really great thing, but it's grade as a magic item is not that high, so don't expect much of defensive power」

It protects from blades, having said that, the Shield is automatically deployed to block against physical attacks, so, it is quite a popular accessory.

It is same as the cross which was hanging from the neck of Cyprus, of course, it

is not a great item to that extent.

Well, Fiona would understand it even without explaining it.

「No, I'm truly happy, thank you for this lovely gift」

Fiona thanked me by bowing very deeply, and politely. I hesitated in saying, It ain't something that great, so just ended this conversation by saying Your Welcome.

「Is it alright to wear it too?」

「Of course」

Like that, Fiona wore the ring, without hesitating, in the ring finger on her left hand.

「.....Is something wrong?」

「No, nothing, it's good that it fits you perfectly」

「Yes」

It ain't a wedding ring that you wear in ring finger of left hand, I thought that, but it was a custom in my world, and it shouldn't be necessarily the same in this world too.

The fingers good for wearing rings are index finger, middle finger and ring finger, these three, and combining of both hands, there are 6 fingers good to wear ring in, in that case, the probability of wearing wedding ring in the ring finger of left hand is going to be $1/6$, so it's almost impossible for this world to have same customs as that on earth.

No, there might not even be the existence of wedding ring present in world.

The reason I thought about wedding ring must be because I know of its existence, and nothing more.

「How is it?」

「Yeah, it looks really great」

The one-sidedly excited me, was only able to give that safe reply to Fiona showing her ring in her ring finger to me.

But, because Fiona is smiling as if understanding everything from my reply, so it's all good.

Chapter 221 - First Date (3)

(POV FIONA)

Fufufu, Kurono-san, who is another worlder and has only lived in Pandora Continent, has no way of knowing the custom of Cross Religion, which is putting the ring meant as a proof of wedding, in the ring finger of left hand.

It's not like I have faith in Cross Religion, but because I have been living in Syncrea Republic, I do hold the common sense of the religious ceremonies that are rooted in the culture and customs of the Republic.

Therefore the image of ceremonial occasions is in the Cross Religion Style, and the custom of wedding ring is something, a female would admire.

Eh, I, certainly, have no intention of fighting against Lily-san, neither have I some feelings for Kurono-san—but however, by getting a ring as a gift from Kurono-san, who is the best man I've met in my 17 years of life, I couldn't help but put in the left hand's ring finger, but I'm sure it's just because I'm a girl.

「FuFuFu.....」

「What happened Fiona, you seem to be in a good mood」

「No, it's just that Kurono-san's horsemanship has improved, so I got happy」

「You think so? I still don't think it's good to the point of being praised—」

I am currently, riding with Kurono-san on the black horse we gifted him, now named as Merry, and are traversing through the great meadows on the suburbs of Spada.

And the one holding the reins is of course Kurono-san, so the freeloader me, is taking this opportunity to grab around his waist and lean my body over his back.

The cleanliness loving Kurono-san visits public bathhouse almost every day but after being glued to him this close, his scent is tickling my nose.

Unintentionally I end up shivering, like 'that time' when I was wrapped in his robe, no, being able to feel his body directly is more stimulating, right.

And as a bonus, the current situation is also great.

Wearing a ring in the ring finger of left hand, riding on the horse led by the man, is almost like a couple going for a honeymoon trip.

「But, sorry, I got you to accompany in my practice」

I'm in a dreamy state, but I always reply to Kurono-san perfectly and immediately.

But, there might be a smirk on my face, so it's good that I'm behind him, grabbing his back.

「No, things like this need to be done whenever you have time」

Originally, the plans were to buy a wand and armor for Kurono-san's black magic, but while eating lunch, due to a conversation, we changed the plans in a hurry, and now we are here, riding on the horse.

Kurono, who has rode the horse for quite a distance, even without Lily-san, is able to control it.

「That's right, but, we just took the lunch before, and this thing shakes a lot, are you fine?」

「There is no problem」

Today I had a good mood, so I ate more than usual, but to have my stomach go on a rampage with just this much, my stomach is weak.

On the other hand, Kurono-san had a somewhat ugly expression during the lunch, but now it's completely fine.

「Come to think of it, will there be classes of horsemanship in the Academy」

「If you want to make do with being an adventurer then it is a necessary thing, as long as you choose Adventurers' Course, it should have been included in the curriculum」

At the very least, even in Elision Magical Academy, horsemanship was taught.

「I see, then maybe I should polish my horsemanship skills upon going to the school」

「Kurono-san, for sure, will become like an Equestrian Mage」

「Equire Mage?」

It literally means as, the cavalrymen who use magic.

Crossing over the battlefield on a horse is not the work of only Knights, sometimes even mages would ride the horses.

「There are also times normal magicians also ride on them, and learn the variant magic systems that are easy to use while riding on a horse」

「There weren't during the time at Alsace」

「The cavalrymen were sent out that time, so there might have been a single group of them which we neglected」

Indeed, Kurono-san nodded.

At conversations like this he is always serious, no, it's not like he is always fooling around.

「Now that I think about it, the Pegasus Knights used『Speed Boost』on the Pegasus, or so Lily said. If those Equire Mage also use enhancement magic, then wouldn't they be faster than normal cavalrymen?」

「You cannot say that unconditionally, normal cavalrymen, even if not mages, learn enhancement magic during training, and if it's their favorite horse, they might even use martial skills like『Air Walker』」

「Is that the so called unity of horse and man thing?」

Of course, I don't know if the invasion troops which attacked Alsace had elite cavalrymen troops group like that.

However, if Kurono-san is going to fight against Crusaders, then surely, he would be fighting against them too.

「Or rather, don't horses use martial skills too」

「As horses are monsters derived from Pegasus and Unicorns, so, among animals, they hold high magical power. By pouring one's own magical power in horse, and by repeating the same process for tuning with the horse, it can be taught the martial skills, based on the experience due to repeated processes, or so I have heard」

I never did training for cavalry, so this is all hearsay knowledge, the authenticity of it is difficult to ascertain.

「Pouring magical power, eh, if it's just that then even I might be able to do it」

「Do you mean Blackening?」

「No, I can't cast Blackening on living things, that is Enchant not a Boost」

「Indeed, but if Kurono-san poured his black magical power, something may occur」

Pouring magical power helps in not just teaching it martial skills but also increase the unity of the horseman and the horse.

Even I am training with the horse, Mari, waiting in the stable, by pouring the magical power.

「T-That might be the case.....」

「I'm sorry, Kurono-san is a resident of a world without magic」

Though this is the way for learning horse-riding which is regarded as common sense, but there wasn't magic existing for him before, he might not realize it if not pointed out by someone.

Kurono-san doesn't seem to have problem in the part of using magic by himself, but in areas like this he surely is lacking in knowledge.

But, it's alright, at that point, I will teach him, not Lily-san, but this me.

「Then, I might as well try—Blackening!」

「Ah, so you still named it as Blackening」

「No, it just slips out whenever I pour out magical power with force」

「I see, but I think it would be good if you don't do it much force」

「Why?」

「Judging from Kurono-san's quantity of magical power, the horse will, without any doubt, go on a rampage」

The moment after pointing it out, the horse neighed loudly and started to jump about like a lunatic.

I and Kurono-san, happily, danced in the air together.

Chapter 222 - People Without Friends x2

That was at the time Simon, in his storage—no, new laboratory, was drawing the blueprint for the soon-to-be mass produced Rifle.

「Fuhahaha!」

From the front door, echoed the sound of laughter he had heard just yesterday.

「Don't tell me it is.....」

「Yes, it is we, the son of—」

Certainly, it was the Second Prince of Spada, Wilhart.

The sound of his voice, and sound of walking reverberated.

Simon, stopping his work temporarily, went ahead to meet this somewhat unmanageable prince.

「Erm, is there something you need here?」

Reluctantly, Simon opened the door of the laboratory, in front stood the slender Wil accompanied by single maid.

「Oh, you finally appear, the Micro Alchemist “Simon Friedrich Bardiel”!」

「What is that nickname!?」

Moreover, a somewhat rude nuance was included in it.

「Mu, well that was quite a good reaction you gave there, Fuhaha, as expected, a child is always filled with energy」

「I'm already an adult!」

Wilhart taps Simon's head while haughtily laughing.

「So, what business do you have here?」

While fixing the messed up hair, caused by the tapping of Wilhart, Simon once again asked Wilhart for his reason to be here.

The maid behind him didn't show any reaction of being concerned. The fact

that she is Wilhart's bodyguard is already a famous talk within the Royal Spada Academy, also, for someone of his status, having a bodyguard follow him around is not a strange thing, this even Simon, who is indirectly related to a noble family, knows and thinks of it as common sense.

Though she wasn't there yesterday, but she might have been hiding somewhere near, or so Simon guessed.

「I came here today too for deepening my friendship with Kurono, but, seems like he didn't come here」

「Onii-san is not a student of our school, so no way would he come here everyday」

In truth I want him to come here everyday, without saying that secret desire on his mouth, he told Wilhart to visit『Cat's Tail』, the chances of meeting him there are high.

It is a perfect personal information release, but with the other party being Wilhart, hiding something from him would only lead to displease his mood and would later become a trouble.

Furthermore, Wilhart has a definite identity of a royalty, telling him this is completely different than telling someone whom Simon doesn't now, a complete stranger.

「I see, if he hasn't come here then it can't be helped—」

Good, now just leave, Simon judged he would leave now, and moved his thoughts back to the construction of mass produced Rifle.

However,

「In that case Simon, I shall deepen my friendship with you」

「Eh?」

To the unexpected request, Simon stiffened.

「Hahaha, haven't we both already sit at the same table and exchanged the cups of sake!」

Table, or more like they just sat on the same floor, in place of cups of sake it

was cups of tea, brewed by Simon.

But, seems like, to Wilhart, just that much was more than enough to become friends.

Simon was dumbfounded at the sudden friendship declaration, but maybe realizing it or not, Wilhart opened his roundabout speaking mouth and starting proceeding smoothly.

「We had heard yesterday about this weapon called gun which ‘doesn’t use magic’, Simon, haven’t you did great deed with this gun you made and used against the Crusaders, so will you show it’s power and your talent to us?」

Thanks to the conversation yesterday, Wilhart already knew how much of achievements Simon got in the Alsace defensive battle.

Though not to the extent of Simon, Wilhart, who is not great at using martial skills or magic, had grown an interest in the weapon called gun which could kill several tens of people.

「Hmm, well it is fine.....」

Simon was originally a shy person, but curiously he had a favorable impression on gun, having Wilhart say this much about gun and him, he didn’t feel bad.

And more than anything, this was the best opportunity to sell the guns to the Spada Royalty.

Simon didn’t had a reason to decline the request of Wilhart.

「Alright then, let’s head to the maneuvering grounds. Now, show me the power of the threat which pulverized the heads of many Crusaders!」

Saying that, Wilhart moved towards the entrance at a quick pace, while laughing as usually.

I’m happy you have expectations for gun, but that manner of speaking is surely tiring for the person hearing it, while thinking that, Simon opened the door of laboratory to pick up the sole Rifle present currently『Yatagarasu V2』

When meeting Wilhart he didn’t had the Rifle in his hands, but normally he would always grip on to it, as he loved that feeling.

Though rank 1, Simon too was an adventurer, so it was a habit to keep the weapon near him at all times, and after experiencing the nightmare at Alsace, his awareness is further increased.

Like that, the moment Simon took hold of『Yatagarasy V2』lying on the table,

「Simon-sama」

「Uwaaa!?!」

He was called out by a voice from behind, which caused him to be surprised to the extent of jumping like a spring.

Holding the Rifle in position and bearing to not pull the trigger, he turned around to check the owner of voice, there stood the bodyguard maid of Wilhart.

「I, Seria Ranboule, is appointed as the bodyguard of Wilhart the Second Prince, please call me Seria」

「I-I see, thank you very much.....」

Just what work does this maid has to do, thinking that Simon sent a suspicious glare to the beautiful maid in front of him.

To Simon giving an vigilant gaze to her, did not cause her blue eyes to flicker and she stared back at him.

「On the other hand, you can also called Prince Wilhart as Wil, or rather I want you to call him as that」

「Is, that so」

Simon somewhat relaxes to the somewhat friendly conversation.

He even thought he would be yelled at for not being to overly familiar with the prince.

「To put in frankly, Wil-sama has got no friends, not even one, so it would be lot better if you be friends with him」

「Y-yes.....」

Even while being astonished by seeing the attitude of Seria which kept on getting colder the more she said words, Simon understood that the rumour of Second Prince being friendless is true.

First Prince, Aisenhart, graduated some years before and was intimate with many students to the extent of being called an idol, compared to that, the popularity of Second Prince was nil.

The marvelous position of Second Prince and that strange manner of speaking makes him unapproachable, but the main reason he is neglected is because of the strength he possesses is in no way comparable to that of his brother.

This was a lethal strike in Spada which was pride for its military prowess.

In spite of the Third Princess being the role model of selfish younger sister, she is really popular just because of the power of her magic.

「He himself is quite hurt by that, so friendless is a taboo word」

「That is true, I understand」

Simon showed an intense agreement.

Being friendless and lonely was a situation same for Simon.

Currently by having Kurono as an understanding person, he didn't had to feel much indebtedness, but still he understood the isolated feeling more than enough, to the extent that affinity rose up within him for Wilhart.

Not only that, by conversing yesterday Simon understood that opposite to that manner of speaking, there was no haughtiness or arrogance of a royalty or nobility.

It is the same for his relation with Kurono, it would have been natural if he said to Kurono that him being a noone rank 2 adventurer should feel honoured with him talking to Kurono.

Wilhart's attitude on the other hand, gave a good impression to Simon, and that is a truth.

「I too want to deepen my friendship with Prince Wilhart—no, Wil」

That's why, those words were not honeyed words, but his true feelings.

「I see, thank you very much」

「Um」

「What happened?」

「Can you please stop stroking my head」

On the head of somewhat shy Simon, was the hand of Seria stroking his glossy ashen-colored hair.

「Sorry, the hand moved on its own」

Chapter 223 - First Date (4)

Though an accident of falling of the horse did occur, but all in all it was a good training.

Around the time sky was painted by madder red, I returned my favorite horse, Merry, back to the stable.

Was it a hallucination caused by my eyes, that Mari, the favorite horse of Fiona which had the same body stature and hair color, looked happy upon seeing Merry return.

However, these two sure look alike, to the extent I cannot differentiate them unless I ask Lily.

「Then, let's go back to the inn」

At this time period, even Lily might be awake.

“Because I had left Lily and played around with Fiona, so it would be good to have dinner together” I thought and started walking my way back to inn.

「Kurono-san」

「What happened?」

However, the one who moved forward was just me, Fiona was petrified on her place.

「Can we go back by taking a detour」

Since I have started living in this Spada, already one whole month is about to pass.

With『Cat's Tail』, the base of my living, as the centre, I know the geography of this place to some extent, hence I took the shortest route between the stable and inn and started to walk.

Fiona's request contradicts my choice, but

「It will be fine too」

I have got any reason to decline her request.

Accompanying with Fiona's whim, taking a detour to walk, and coincidentally reach inn is not a bad idea.

「Thank you very much」

「Don't mention it, so shall we go」

Immediately replying, I stood besides Fiona and started walking in the direction which I haven't passed by yet.

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. .

(POV FIONA)

I walked along with Kurono-san on the avenue made up by small blue flower in full bloom.

In this Spada, there are four avenues on which flowers bloom according to the four seasons, one can enjoy the full bloom at every season, or so the saying goes here.

That means that in the middle of summer one can see these eloquent tradescantia. {TLN: Tradescantia = Spiderwort = well blue flowers found somewhere on earth only}

I never had thought the information of Recommended Date Spots given by the fairy information broker, I went to meet with Lily-san, would come handy.

It was good that I also looked over it along with Lily-san.

“I'm sorry, for taking the date course with Kurono-san before you” I somewhat apologized to Lily-san in my heart, got closer to Kurono-san and continued to walk on the blue road.

「By the time we reach the end of this avenue, it will sure get night」

「Indeed」

Normally the perfect way of appreciation would be to gaze at these tradescantia under clear skies or something like that, so, there are not many people walking at this evening time.

Other than the interspecies couple of a human male student and werecat female student, we didn't see the figures of people anymore.

Speaking of Couple, do we both also seem like that, currently?

It's somewhat disappointing because there is no romantic talk between Kurono and me, unlike the couple from before: "Your fur is truly pretty, makes me want to stuff my face in it" "Oh, you're just too much of a pervert~".

Though we talked less, but, I don't hate this silence.

The time flows slowly, making me feel comfortable as if dozing under the warm sunlight of spring, that is surely because, besides me is the world's best man, Kurono-san.

「Hey, Fiona」

「Yes, what happened Kurono-san?」

He calls out my name making me feel ecstatic, *moan*, call my name out more, desire me more.

「Did you have fun?」

We had lunch, then trained horse-riding, eventually the date ended with just this much, and Kurono-san seems to be concerned about that fact.

「Yes, I had lots of fun」

So, without lying, I said my heartfelt intentions.

It is fun, when I'm with you, everything in the world looks different.

「I see. I'm relieved to hear that. Shall we go again like this for holidays--」

I wasn't able to look in the eyes of Kurono-san, who was smiling while saying that.

His face is too dazzling, attractive and charming, if I looked at him.....I might end up wanting it.

「--But, this time along with Lily」

To the continuation of the words, I unintentionally stopped my legs.

Not just that, the fever which was wrapping my body, rapidly faded.

「Yes.....you're right」

I want to praise myself for replying naturally without distancing myself from him.

Nooo, in the first place, why am I receiving a shock about?

Kurono-san along with me and Lily-san is only natural, after all, we three are a party.

To begin with, the one wanting a love relationship is Lily-san, and I have not in the least intention of interfering.

The one who would get in relationship are Kurono-san and Lily-san, not me..... no, this is strange from the point I thought about me getting in relation with Kurono-san.

After all, Kurono-san, towards me, has no romantic feeling as he has towards Lily-san, he doesn't have, it's not right for him to have them.....truly?

「What happened, Fiona?」

Seems like, I was too drowned in my thoughts.

With me being absent-minded, I have given him more worry.

「No, nothing much, just thinking of something--」

The moment I said those words

「Hey! What are you!?」

In front of the road, the voice of an girl with an not-so-normal appearance reverberated.

The owner of the voice leaped out of from the shade of tree and appeared right in front of us.

She was a slender elf girl with ideal body proportions, wearing a white cape.

Contrary to her sever tone, it's obvious that she is afraid, because her legs were shaking fiercely.

Her vision was not towards us, but towards a tree on the side of the road with numerous tradescantia growing around it.

Seems like, on the end of her vision someone is present.

「Fiona」

「Yes, I understand」

From this distance, I was able to sense the not-common presence of that ‘someone’ in the shade of tree—no, speaking more frankly, I was able to sense the ominous magical power and bloodlust, which should be existing only in battlefields or dangerous dungeons, and not in this peaceful city.

「Hiii!？」

While raising a short scream, she sank down to the ground, at the same time, the ‘deviant’ chasing her appeared.

It’s obvious to know the person is an male werecat, wearing leather armor meaning he is an adventurer.

He is a werecat, though having a slender body, it can be seen just by one glance that he has devoted many years and months in training.

Most probably, from the pov of a werecat he might seem like a handsome man, but seeing the sinister red light residing in his both eyes, and a big sword of dark reddish color, probably caused by lots of blood, can make one understand that he is insane.

I see, so he is the serial killer who has been going around here and there in Spada recently.

Looking at the reddish aura coming from the sword, which is only the characteristic of cursed weapons, it’s easy to understood he fell under the curse of weapon.

However, I think I have seen that big sword somewhere—-

「Let’s go」

Hearing Kurono-san’s voice, I stopped my thoughts exploring my memories.

There’s no need to explain anymore, I already know, Kurono-san has determined to cross attacks with that man and his big sword.

The moment I took out the Staff『Ainz Broom』from the pouch,

「『Speed Boost』—— يعمل من خلال سرعة」

I casted boost on the back of Kurono-san, who ran forward while brandishing his hatchet.

Chapter 224 - Identity of the Devilish Murderer

The person swinging the large fang sword, facing the female Elf who has already fallen on her back, must be that murderer from the rumors.

However, for that criminal to be a person whose face and name I know about.

No, the most surprising fact would be that Joto, a rank 3 adventurer, was attacking so fiendishly because of the curse from the『Fang Sword『Evil Eater』』, right.

「Darn.....」

It involuntarily made me speak abusive word.

The『Fang Sword『Evil Eater』』transformed into a Cursed Weapon, in other words, it's owner, Vulcan, died with great extent of malice for this to occur.

And the reason of that malice and hatred is 11th Apostle Misa, as for how she slaughtered them all, I have no idea.

But, for there to be so much malice and hatred to change a weapon into Cursed Weapon means, they weren't even able to fight properly before dying.

That bitch, killed them all by toying with them, I had guessed that much from their corpses and destruction, but now I am sure of it.

Fu*k, makes me want to throw up.

As if agreeing with my wrath,『Absolute Grudge Hatchet『Kubidan』』darkens the hue of aura around it.

Unfortunately, there ain't the needed person I want to bust this anger into.

But, for saving the girl being attacked in front of me, I swing the blade.

「Red Calm (Akanagi)」

This martial skill, changes the blood sipped by hatchet into a crimson blade, and decreases the distance between an object impossible to reach to zero.

The large sword swung right now at the female elf, clashed with the blade of blood from the flank, and changed its trajectory while releasing sparks.

「Aaaaa!？」

At that moment, maybe he finally noticed my existence present near, the insane Joto's red eyes turn towards me.

But, by this time I had already run up to the point where he can reach in the blade's range without using Akanagi, after getting the『Speed Boost』by Fiona, the distance of some tens of meters can be covered in a second or so.

「Kuronagi」

I release the my all-the-most-familiar martial skill.

This attack was aimed at the body of Joto, if it hits him, surely he along with the leather armor, would be split in two.

The the attack with the power of sure-kill attack was stopped by swiftly using the sword as a shield.

Was that reaction because Joto was skilled, or the curse had enhanced his bodily functions, in either case, even when in insane mode the sword techniques don't become blunt.

A shrill metallic sound reverberated, at the same time, Joto's body , which took Kuronagi head-on, flew backwards, no, he himself jumped backwards to absorb the shock from the attack.

That agility shows that Joto is not a power type, like the giant Vulcan, but is a Speed Type attacker specializing in evasion and warding-off attacks.

Concerning the results, my attack was superbly blocked, but thanks to him jumping far back, quite a distance had opened up.

Without pursuing anymore, I turn back quickly, extend my hand towards the fallen female student, and lift up her slender and beautiful body.

「Eh, Kyaa!」

A scream filled with surprise, and a soft and warm feeling, along with a faint scent of perfume which tickled my nose, all of this, in normal times, would have made me think many things, but there ain't time to think about it right now.

Shouldering the female student by my left arm, I jumped away from that place, and at the same time,

「Bullet Arts」

I push out my right hand, still gripping the hatchet, and several tens of bullets visited Joto.

The bullets made completely from black magical energy vanished before even reaching him because of the blade with the curse of『Evil Eater』.

That phenomenon was the same as to when I faced-off against the『Crime Eater』controlled by Cyprus.

The attack didn't reach him, but still it was enough to stop Joto's pursuit.

Joto jumped backwards and I to the opposite side, due to the opening between us, I was able to get out the area where he could've attacked me by throwing the sword.

Upon landing, I take down the female student from my shoulder.

「Are you all right?」

She was still looking towards Joto but, this time she was standing on her both feet rather than falling on her butt out of fear.

「U-Um—」

「I will stop that guy, please escape right now, if you can then call the polic—, I mean『Law Guardian』, that much will help me a lot」

I tell her the important stuff briefly.

There isn't even a single good thing if she remained here.

After all his aim is the murder of this female student, in the worst case he might come attacking at her by putting his life on line, therefore fighting while protecting is too much of a dangerous task.

I don't think this female student would be, Mia or some other god, in disguise form.

For me, getting this girl out of this place ASAP is more important.

After that, with me and Fiona, a single insane swordsman won't be much of a deal.

「Go, hurry up」

Upon my suggestion, the female student finally turns on her heel and runs off, I sensed it from across my back.

「Thank you very much, Kurono-san!」

The words of gratitude reach my ears, judging from that there doesn't seem to any state of confusion in her mind, if it's like this she will be able to report correctly.

Of course, before help comes from other side, we would be over with our work.

No, but, I feel something in her words, like an uneasy feeling—oh well, before I even thought about this stuff, Joto moved.

「I won't let you get away, you bitch!!!!」

While shouting that, Joto brandished the long sword and with the strong yet agile legs of a Werecat, he kicked off the ground.

The girl who escaped is an Elf, if he chased straightly behind her, no wonder he would catch her, but fuck it, don't think you can get past me.

After all, I have the most suitable thing for stalling someone, that is『Anchor Hand』

Most of it might be eaten by the Evil Eater but it is better than fighting against Crime Eater, which were specialized in eating the black magical energy.

While brandishing the hatchet with vigilance, I pour black magical energy in『Black Haired Curse「Coffin」』and create more firm tentacles.

Now come on, the moment you get past me, I will seal your movements with tentacles, then finish the game by cutting off your arm along with that Cursed Weapon—

「Dieeeeeeeeeeee!!」

The fiercely running Joto's aim was not the me protecting the back of the already-escaped female student, but Fiona.

「Wha, Oi bastard!？」

This fucking bastard was spouting shit like, I won't let you get away, so I thought he would chase after the elf female student, but now I see, he's fine as long as he gets to cut any young girl.

Another possibility is that rather than chasing the Elk student, he chose attack Fiona who was near and more easy to reach.

But, going after a all-so-common looking Elk female students is better than going after Fiona, a witch, no, wait, ain't magic bad.

Looking at her, Fiona had already taken her stance with staff in hands and started chanting.

Judging from the distance and Joto's speed, she would be able to shoot low grade magic.

But, in that case it's not gonna be good, after all the thing he has is,

「Run away Fiona! The magic will be eaten by Evil Eater!!」

I chase Joto whilst shouting, but Joto was already at the point where he would reach Fiona with the sword, and Fiona had already released her magic attack.

「—『Ignis Sagitta』」

The magic shot out from Fiona's favorite『Ainz Broom』, unlike『Custom Fire Ball』, explodes with the original power of Fiona's berserk magical energy.

The『Ignis Sagitta』without the quantity of heat and explosive power of a low

grade magic, hit directly in the target in front of her.

The heating power of the heat is about that of a Intermediate Offensive Magic『Ignis Kris Sagitta』—In Irz Village, Vulcan easily defended against a intermediate fire magic, in other words, a person holding Evil Eater cannot be defeated by this grade of fire power.

「Vaaaaooooooooo!!」

My vision was covered by the fumes from explosion, I could only hear the insane bellowing of Joto.

‘Please evade successfully’, while praying that in my heart, I jumped in the smoke with lingering heat, it was that moment that,

SFX: GAshHHAaaNNnn!

I heard a shrill sound as if a glass just broke.

‘What is this sound, did the defensive magic got broken!?’

「Fiona!」

The smoke cleared up and my vision returned.

There, the stone pavement of the ground was broken by the swinging of sword by Joto, and standing 3 meters away from him was Fiona.

Her white blouse was still clean white without any dirt, seems like only some defensive magic was broken, but she evaded the slash.

As expected of Fiona, with her using『Air Walker』freely, even a knight or swordsman would find it difficult to approach her.

I can sense her experience of doing adventurer work solely.

I watch her with admiration and relief filling my mind, huh, what, she looks somewhat strange?

Though I think that, in front of me is the back of Joto.

It would be troublesome if he attacked Fiona, so I lashed out at him.

「Don'tttt InnTERFERE!!」

As expected, he won't let me cut him obediently.

Though insane, with his sword skills, he magnificently warded-off the attack aimed at his back.

But as long as he is aiming at Fiona, I can only attack him without opening up any distance.

Taking head on the sword slash of Joto, evading, and counter attacking.

The long sword and big hatchet furiously rally, and it turned into a fight of

swords in the end.

「Kuu!?!」

「I won't forgive those who interfere! I won't forgive her, including you, you fucking faggot!」

In case of pure swordsmanship, Joto, who is from Swordsman Class, holds the upper hand.

I am familiar in fighting against monsters with sword, but I don't have an anti-person combat skill which can help me fight against a trained swordsman, the experience in that area is low by just an inch, but even that much less loss is showing the difference here.

And, every time I clash the hatchet against the blade of Evil Eater, it eats of most of the blackening I have cast upon it, so it too is a problem for me.

So I have to keep on pouring the black magical energy.

Though the amount consumed is not much, but always pouring the magical energy causes my concentration power to flicker.

I am already at my wits end with the swinging of hatchet, so in no way can I use『Sword Arts』right now.

This is somewhat bad, but, I can overturn this situation if Fiona casts Boost on me.

Soon enough the『Speed Boost』is going to wear out, so if she extends the time of boost and casts『Force Boost』, my victory will be decided.

But, for some reason, that Boost just doesn't come.

‘What is Fiona doing?’, with an expression of bewilderment I glanced towards the place she was standing.

There stood Fiona, just standing, no maybe I should rephrase it as she was standing stock still with a dazed expression.

Holding her wand in right hand, she was just deeply watching her left hand.

What exactly happened? Fiona had turned into a petrified statue.

Chapter 225 - The Lost Things

「Run away Fiona! The magic will be eaten by Evil Eater」

From Kurono-san's advice, I am finally convinced.

This longsword that the swordsman is wielding is『Fang Sword「Evil Eater」』, the one Vulcan-san, the werewolf used to have.

The trouble this magical power eating Evil Eater brings is something, even a witch like me, knows to full extent.

However,

「—『Ignis Sagitta』」

I can't stop offensive magic now.

Rather than revoking the chant half-way, it's better to just shoot it out and it will save time more for choosing the next actions, with the sword-swinigng insane swordsman in front of me, I give out that conclusion with a calm mind.

I fired『Ignis Sagitta』and coincidentally, poured magical power in my both legs and to invoke the martial skill.

「『Air Walker』」

The inhuman reflex speed and movement are shown, the moment I left the place, the swordsman, who also migh have his ablties enhanced, passed through the smoke and swung the fang sword down.

However, I have experienced being challanged at this distance a whole lot of times.

It's all great if I evade it, and I also have enough speed in my legs right now to evade this attack, albeit barely.

I kicked the ground with my loafer and stepped backwards, due to the momentum my hair, which weren't held by my hat, flutterd in front of me.

The thundersouly falling blade, without being able to seize my crown of head, just cut down the fluttering tips of my blue hair.

I evaded successfully,

SFX: GAshhaaAAaaaAAaaaaaannNNNN!

That, shrill sound as if a defensive magic of light just got broken, reached my ears after I landed 3 metres away.

「Eh.....」

Strange, I just took evasive measures without using any defensive magic, in the first place I cannot use light magic which can create defense which make sounds like this of breaking into pieces.

Then, just what made this sound?

.

「『Athena Guard Ring』, this ring is embedded with the divine protection from a goddess named Athena, and protects the wearer from blades」

.

I remember, right now I possess a magic item which protects the wearer from the physical attacks.

.

「Hearing the name it might sound like a really great thing, but its grade as a magic item is not that high, so don't expect much of defensive power」

.

The fact those words were truth was something I, who can somewhat judge things as a witch, understood easily.

But, what's important to me isn't price or grade or anything relating to somethings' preciousness.

This ring is something Kurono-san, you gave me, to me it's already a treasure.

「Ah, Ah.....」

However, the fact the magic item was of low grade was the truth.

The only natural conclusion upon taking a frontal blow from already-cursed longsword would be to break along with the shield of Divine Protection.

And, magic items which deploy shield, originally, are made in the way that if defense is broken the item too gets broken.

If it isn't a very-high-grade item, it can't deploy defence many times.

Then, the low-grade『Athena Guard Ring』would naturally break if the defense is broken through.

「Ah.....this.....」

The ring that was just shining in the ring finger of my left hand just, AaaaaaAAAAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

It's not here! It's not here! The ring is gone, without leaving a single trace!!

Arrghhhh, Arrrgghhh, What shall I do! Why, that ring was my treasure,

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Fiona lost her ring and sanity.

Chapter 226 - The Torrent of Red Murderous Intent

Fiona moved.

「What—」

Those strange symptoms started showing from the time Fiona casted three types of Boost on her.

I couldn't understand why would she cast Boost on herself and not me.

I only understood that I haven't heard a magic which goes by the name of『Ignis Breaker』 and also that the effect of this magic is to cover the tip of wand with a fireball, it seemed like a burning matchstick.

But, what is she going to do?

That was the starting, Fiona was always calm, even when confronting 8th Apostle Ai, she did her job easily and calmly.

She wasn't self-centered that she would go solo disregarding my orders, that's how it was, but what is this?

Before I even derived on the answer to that question, Fiona moved this very moment.

In her hand was a lit-up『Ainz Broom』and『Custom Fireball』which she took out at some point, a two-sword style, no, two-wand style.

With the effects of Martial Skill and Boost, Fiona, with a speed not at all inferior to the current me, came ramming in the area a longsword and a hatchet were rallying.

「『Ignis Sagitta』」

She first swing the『Custom Fireball』

Originally this low grade offensive magic only has firepower that is below average, however, I already know the ones Fiona shot out had tremendous rapid-fire successions added to it.

A single shot may not have much explosive power, but if several tens of them shots come flying in rapidly from point-blank range, the after effects would reach even me.

My crisis judgement coming from my reasoning power, and the sixth sense

triggering the crisis incoming alarm, made me take evasive measures immediately.

Swinging the hatchet sideways quite forcefully, I opened the distance between us in a single jump.

Joto tried to jump after me in pursuit, but maybe he realized the existence of several tens of fireballs aiming at him, and in correspondence to his fast reflexes, he used the Evil Eater as a shield to block of the attack.

Several of the『Ignis Sagitta』vanished in front of his eyes.

However, Evil Eater can even absorb intermediate grade offensive magic, so no matter how many low grade offensive magic attack at him, they wouldn't be able to burn even the tip of his hair.

Fiona, who knows about that all-too-well, on the contrary, doesn't show signs of stopping the rapid fire of『Ignis Sagitta』, not only that, she was also not showing signs of stopping her legs which were running towards Joto.

What, don't tell me that she is going to hit him with the wand—

「WTF!？」

And, the don't tell me, did happen.

While firing from the『Custom Fireball』, she swung the still lit-up『Ainz Broom』and hopped onto Joto.

Fiona continued shooting『Ignis Sagitta』even after reaching point-blank range, due to that, though Joto was able to not get any damage, but his movements were restricted.

While taking on the after effect of impact, he flung off the『Ainz Broom』with his longsword while enduring the sweltering heat with the help of a『Nana Blast Amulet』.

SFX: ZuuDooOOOODOOOOONnn!

A conspicuously large explosion sound rang out, I saw Joto being blown off after getting hit by the shockwaves.

The flying-in-the-air boy of Joto, hit the trunk of a tree on one side of the avenue, which caused his movement to stop.

His back has been hit really hard, but still he didn't let go off the sword from his right hand.

But, the impact wasn't something light that he would be able to regain his posture the next moment, so he stood while staggering.

To the already-pursuing Fiona, that was more than enough of a gap to the opportunity of.

As if『Custom Fireball』has its work finished, she put it back, and put both hands on the『Ainz Broom』which was still lit-up by a crimson flame lotus.

Holding the wand, no, let's go with what the official magic name says. Holding the 'Flame Mallet', she swung it hard, hitting it on the defenseless Joto's crown of head.

Once again loud explosion rang out, the waves even reached me.

But, I too am in the possession of『Nana Blast Amulet』, so the waves felt like gentle breeze flowing about.

At any rate, the fight's over now.

That explosive power could be called above intermediate grade and below advanced grade, but having something like that exploded on the head of a normal person with no high-class fire resistance like Wrath-Pun, or without any defensive magic item, there's no chance of getting out of it unscathed.

The Berserk mode may increase physical abilities like reflexes and arm strength, but it doesn't make the body and flesh strong at all.

And Joto wasn't even able to block it off with his last ray of hope『Fang Sword「Evil Eater」』, so his chances of survival are extinct.

Now that we have killed the insane Joto, our work is done here.

「Fiona, he's dead—」

The moment I was putting hatchet in the dimension,

SFX: ZuuDDooooOOONNnnnnnnNN!

The third explosion sound rang out.

Dimly shining something went past my vision within just a breath of time.

Before I knew it『Fang Sword「Evil Eater」』was besides me with a hand still holding its hilt.

「huh?」

What is this? Before I even asked myself that question, it's answer came to me in quite fast speed, that Fiona inflicted more attacks to Joto, that his hand got torn off and came flying till here.

Did she not finish him off at that time? Or maybe she was vigilant of the cursed weapon?

The new question that came floating up—

SFX: ZuddDDOooooNNNNnn!

-Gets negated by the fourth explosion sound.

I couldn't see properly, but I can make out the silhouette of Fiona swinging the『Fire Mallet』on the dead body of Joto.

SFX: ZuUuDdDdoOoOnNnN!

The fifth explosion sound rang out, the sound was lower than before, maybe the efficacy of magic faded somewhat.

But, the power of magic is no relevance now, after all the opponent is already dead.

SFX: DoOoN!

By the sixth explosion, the sound got more faint.

Maybe the firepower to make new smoke rise up was gone that due to the small waves of explosion, the fumes surrounding Fiona cleared up.

SFX: DOo!

By the seventh time, the magic was completely gone, and only the dull sound of metal hitting flesh resounded.

「Hey, Fiona.....」

Now I can clearly see it.

Fiona was still swinging the wand on the head of Joto, which can be said to be in cinders.

SFX: DOo, DOo, DOo—-

Fiona, like a machine, kept on showering the dead body with blows.

Her face was expressionless as always, but this time alone it felt like she was wearing a mask, it was an expression I never saw in her, as if she was someone else.

「Hey—-」

Abnormal, right now that words is the only one that fits her.

「—-Stop it, Fionaaa!」

And I cannot watch her in this state, I can't bear to watch it.

I grabbed Fiona's hand from behind and stop her meaningless and merciless attacks.

「Stop this shit right now, this guy is already dead」

I squeeze out words slowly as if trying to persuade her.

Maybe she realized my existence behind her, Fiona slowly turned her head back.

「Ah.....Kurono, -san」

In Fiona golden eyes, there was no light that could be called life present.

These dull and hollow golden eyes grasp my figure in them.

「Please stop, now gently put down the wand」

It's like she became someone else, no more like it's a lifeless doll with her looks, seeing her like that I felt a fear that could freeze my spine, but it's bad if I get shocked right now.

As I said, I released her arms.

「.....Yes」

The wand fell on the stone pavement making a lifeless *clang* sound.

Her arms fell down powerlessly, and I once again face Fiona, who was now standing upstraight.

「What happened, Fiona?」

I gaze her drowsy and intoxicated eyes from the front.

「Ah, I.....」

Fiona eyes trembled slightly.

After some seconds of silence, she continued.

「My, ring.....」

「Ring?」

Speaking of that, she probably meant the one I gifted to her during noon.

I lowered my gaze and found out that the silver ring which was in her left ring finger, was gone.

「Ah, I see」

『Athen Guard Ring』had it's divine protection shield broken, and it too broke.

That means that glass breaking sound from before was of shield being crumbled, now that I think about it, Cyprus's shield that I broke also made a similar sound.

「I got the ring broke.....I'm very, sorry.....」

「It's fine, don't--」

Should I say something like “Don'y worry about it” so thoughtlessly.

If Fiona went insane just because it was hard for her to believe the fact that the ring broke, then this matter is nothing small.

It's not like it was her parent's memento, or maybe she got that much emotional attachment just because I gave it to her.

Fiona left her master and is alone ever after, to her, me and Lily might be the first comrades and friends.

In that case, she might have been liking it very much, after all her friend gave it to her.

If the person himself who gifted her, in other words, me said words like 'don't worry about it', then it's like I'm rejecting her sense of values.

Of course, there is a possibility that this is all my misunderstanding and I'm being conceited.

「I'm sorry Kurono-san, very much sorry—」

Fiona cried.

From her beautiful eyes, tears fall down with no signs of stopping.

Her crying face, which I see for the first time, was still expressionless, and without letting out even a single sound, the tears just kept on falling silently.

And while crying, Fiona kept on apologizing to me for getting the ring broken.

Seeing her tragic figure, my heart ached as if a fissure cut it up.

Stop it, don't cry, seeing you crying like that, Fiona, is extremely painful.

That's why, for not watching her tears, I grabbed her shoulders, and hugged her.

It's okay, Fiona is not in the wrong, the ring broke because the shield got broken, right, then didn't it protect you after all」

Her face sank right in my chest.

Her body was warm, the same as when I hugged Lily, a doll won't have this warmth.

Now that I think about it, embracing a same aged girl, is a first for me in this world, in which I have gone through lots of shit.

「If my ring, was able to protect you from even a single scratch, then me buying a gift for you wasn't in vain」

「I.....Is that so?」

「Yeah, it's good Fiona is unhurt. That's right, this time I will gift you a ring with stronger effect which will protect you. If you're worried that what happened

today would happen later, then I will give you a normal ring too. So, can you please stop crying?」

After saying all that stuff, I realize that I just said some truly embarrassing things, and my face turned hot.

At the same time, I got anxious that what if my speech was completely off the mark——

「Wwaaa!?!」

Fiona's rely wasn't words but action, till now she was getting embraced by me, but now her slender arms were strongly embracing me too.

Don't blame me for letting out such a pathetic voice due to her unexpected reaction.

The people who would actually hug me, is only Lily who always plays around with me, I never thought Fiona too would be like this.

My heart was filled with surprise, and embarrassment, no, not embarrassment but something more like.....anyhow, my heart was in conflicted state, and before it regained composure, Fiona said her words.

「Kurono-san.....I'm sorry, and Thank you very much」

Fiona said the words of gratitude and apology at the same time.

What could be her expression right now, has she stopped crying, I can't see her face because she is still hugging me, but

「It's fine Fiona, it's fine already」

I understood that Fiona regained her sanity.

Like that till the Law Guardian came after getting reports, me and Fiona were embracing each other under the tree of blue cherry blossoms.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

It's finally April, and looks like spring has come for Fiona too.

[SOME UNEEDED STUFF]

Please keep on reading Kuro no Maou.

Chapter 227 - Love Rival

‘A witch never loves’, I always thought that proverb as truth.

The first love people experience in childhood was something I never had a clue about, even when commuting to Elysion Magic Academy, which happened to be a co-ed, I still had no interactions with things called love, I never understood it.

However, on the 13th of Red Flame Month, I was made to realize from the bottom of my heart.

That it’s a lie that witches cannot love.

「It’s okay, Fiona is not in the wrong, the ring broke because the shield got broken, right, then didn’t it protect you after all」

And when Kurono-san embraced me, I understood that this is love.

No, in truth, I held feelings for Kurono-san from a long time ago.

I had been desperately dodging that fact, denying it, and have been persuading myself saying ‘it’s nothing’.

Certainly, I was afraid of accepting that fact.

After all, Kurono-san got Lily-san, and, someone like me who can’t even be a friend let alone lover, whose only worth is the magical firepower, that sort of me isn’t attractive enough to be together with him.

Someone like me, has got right to lay hands on him, has got no right to wish for him, I, just am not.

However,

「If my ring, was able to protect you from even a single scratch, then me buying a gift for you wasn’t in vain」

It was already too late for me.

Even enduring, and giving up was impossible now, I can’t bear it anymore, I can’t hold it back anymore, about wanting Kurono-san, about wanting Kurono-

san for me.

My heart has become something which only thinks about him, about wanting to be in his arms, wanting to hear his kind words, it's like as if my heart has got the curse of love sickness, or Charm has been casted on it, my heart has gone insane for him.

Now I understand; the feelings of those girls who talked about love, during the academic years.

The feeling of those girls who left the school because they conceived the child of the person they loved.

The feelings of those girls, who killed themselves because they could never be with the person they love.

‘Useless, it’s nonsensical, there’s no need for it’, I now feel pity for the past me who used to think like that.

After all, If I had known this beautiful feeling from before, had realized them, everything in the world seems different.

「Yeah, it’s good Fiona is unhurt. That’s right, this time I will gift you a ring with stronger effect which will protect you. If you’re worried that what happened today would happen later, then I will give you a normal ring too. So, can you please stop crying?」

If Kurono-san says so, I will stop crying, I can show that I can stop my tears.

That’s why, give it to me, give a ring to me, this time I will never let it get broken.

The ring I would wear in my left ring finger, won’t be because of some attraction or yearning for it, but it would be the oath of my love for you.

「—Fufu」

And currently, in my left ring finger, a new silver ring is shining brightly.

This plain looking ring has not even a bit of divine protection power or magic, it’s without a doubt, a normal ring.

However, Kurono-san gave it to me, to me—

「Aren't you quite too happy, Fiona」

Due to that voice, the heat reigning over my head rapidly cooled off.

Looking more closely, Lily-san, in her young girl form, stood in front of me.

There is no other present in the surroundings except me and Lily-san, right in front of my room.

「Isn't that a nice ring, that, where you got that from?」

「Kurono-san gave it to me」

Lily-san was still showing a fearless smile, but just now, a little bit of her Light magical power leaked out.

「I see, good for you」

「Yes, after getting such a beautiful present from Kurono-san, I am truly elated」

I've got no reason to lie to her.

Even without Telepathy, Lily-san might already have guessed most of the part.

「Makes me quite jealous, you went on a date with Kurono, not just yesterday, even today too」

「I have did the information gathering, though」

Joto, the serial killer, was done in by me and Kurono-san, so today we had to give a report to the Spada's military police.

There was also the evidence of Cursed Weapon, and the fact a elf girl was attacked, so the case was closed with, 'An adventurer killed a person with bounty on his head'

On the way back, Kurono-san gave me this new ring.

Incidentally, the replacement of a magic item like『Athena Guard Ring』was postponed for a later date, due to Kurono-san's wallet circumstances.

Ufufu, I'm waiting for the new gift, Kurono-san

「Hmm, Fiona, you haven't forgotten, right? Our rule」

「Of course, I haven't forgot it, in a party love always leads to trouble, right」

My and Lily-san's gaze intersect.

Her emerald eyes are cute and round, but they carry a ferocious light equaling to rank 5 monster.

Don't make a scary face like that Lily-san, I'm not that hasty person who would break our current relationship so fast.

Even I have reasoning power to control my heat, just like you.

「I see, then it's fine」

「It's good that you understood it」

Saying that, Lily-san and I faced our respective rooms.

Lily-san opened the door and entered the room immediately.

When I think about her sleeping together with Kurono, this, boiling up feeling swells in the heart.

「Lily-san is so sly」

Entering my room, I jumped on my bed and muttered.

「Sly」

Not good, at this time I need to see the ring, touch it, and control my emotions.

「Sigh.....Love Rival, that just sounds too cliché.....」

This love rival, would become my greatest and strongest enemy ever, I only have a premonition like that.

But, I've got no intention of losing, neither giving up.

I have now understood, that I just can't help but be in love with Kurono-san.

「——Thinking of the worst case, I need to make a plan to kill Lily-san anyhow, or it wouldn't be good」

.

.

.

In the adjacent room from Fiona's room.

「I somewhat knew it would happen like this, but now looking at it, something just rises up inside my heart—」

Lily lied on the bed the same way, and uttered the same thing.

「——Thinking of the worst case, I need to make a plan to kill Fiona anyhow, or it wouldn't be good」

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The Cold War has started.....

6th April 2012

In the comments, I was asked 'What happened to Dengeki first prize?'. Sorry, I have completed the entry last month.

So the results would be around summer time. As for rest, I can only pray for a good result!

Chapter 228 - The Curse Of Evil Eater

Since birth he had a large body.

As time elapsed, the more he grew, the more obvious it became.

By the time he was an adult his height easily crossed over 2 meter. Even among the werewolves, with his strong body, the power he possessed was too overpowering.

Before he knew it, there was no one who could defeat him in the village.

It might be natural that someone like him left the small village and went in the outside world as an adventurer.

At that time he thought that he was the strongest person in the world.

Just like『Orphan Wolf: Volfgand』, whose legends have been passed down among wolves.

Yes, he was a person resembling similarly to a frog in a well, it was nothing more than a stereotypical 'Boasting of Strength in Village' sort of thing.

The fate people like them follow, were always similar.

Some meet people stronger than themselves, also learn about the existence of magic, to which power can never match up to, or some just end up becoming food of monsters before even understanding the difference in power.

People wanting to become adventurers, because they have stronger arm strength, learn the truth later, then either they return to their birthplace or die in a quest.

Him, who was a werewolf with just large body and admired the legend of Volgand, also had to follow the same path.

In truth, he experienced the same as others.

He was beaten easily with just a single hand, has his body burnt black, he was even almost eaten by a monsters, and et cetera, now even counting it

would be ridiculous.

He learned the vastness of world, in this world, there were 'strong people' counting more than 50 thousand, the people who he can never beat no matter no what.

But however, he never stopped being an adventurer, neither was he eaten by a monster.

Why was that?

The answer was simple, an answer that every adventurer would know—- Because he had a comrade.

A Swordsman, who at first, joined formed a team with him because they were of same race.

But if the Swordsman hadn't protected his back, he would have long lost against the marching army of Vindols.

The next one he met was an Archer.

If the Archer, who made long distance shooting possible, didn't get rid of the Goblin Mage, two Swordsman would've have died.

Like that, he, no, they met various other Adventurers like that.

By the time he reached Rank 2, they had a party of 5 established, with 2 Swordsman, 1 Archer and 1 Mage.

Their perfectly-balanced party as an adventurer, completed various quest with difficulties, took on numerous scars, but they continued on, without losing even a single member.

Before they knew it, the party had reached Rank 4.

Them, who were nothing more than 'Boasting of Strength in Village', now became adventurers worthy of being called First-class.

The fact they thought themselves to be the strongest, was now something of distant past.

He now had, not only the title, but also the divine protection of『Volfgand』, and his comrades who overcame difficulties together with him, too became a

first-class adventurers.

Hence,

「11th Apostle Misa」

That's why,

「Well, you lowly demons won't know the meaning of this name, though--」

He wasn't able to forgive the deeds of that woman.

「Well then, try your best, and die in an interesting and funny way just so I don't get bored」

Adventurers were always prepared because they might die at any time.

Getting eaten by monsters, getting killed by the traps in Dungeons, or being attacked by an Adventurer wanting to kill steal, or being attacked by the bandits aiming for equipment and money.

「Hey hey, don't you dare die instantly, after raising a death agony reaching upto heavens, you can die, or you can't」

If getting killed by monster, the blame is upon one's power.

「You guys here, do you know your existence itself is a sin, understand it?」

Dying via traps can be blamed on one's carelessness.

「Then isn't it natural that you should die」

Dying by a Kill Stealer, or bandits can be blamed on the person showing leeway.

「But if you're going to die, how about making me, an apostle happy. Like that you would have a good defense against God residing in heaven, don't you think so?」

That's why,

「Ah, that's right, if a demon kills another demon, would mean that person worked for god, right, then you will have stronger defense against god. Hey, you wolf over there--」

Rather than blaming his powerlessness,

「Can't you try to kill other people?」

He could only detest this woman.

「Huh? You refuse? What the shit you spouting out, listen to what great humans say, come on, wag your tail and do the work happily, after all I, 11th Apostle Misa, the one chosen by God, is saying you to do it. You will do it right —『Madonna Charm』」

Her pair of eyes, which were the same purple color as her hair, was shining bewitchingly.

「See, now you want to kill them, right?」

The moment his eyes met hers, his own fate was destroyed, to a fate in which he would be played by the woman, to a fate much more vicious ridiculous and cruel.

「Then first, kill those puppies, same as you, tear them from limb to limb」

He was sane, and would never hear the woman's words, to kill his comrade, his party member.

However, due to the effect of some sort of magic, his body started to move on its own, as per the woman's orders.

He cut down his comrade with his longsword.

He cut down the Swordsman, Archer, Mage, all the comrades he walked with for so many years, with his own hands.

In his super strong hands was his favorite longsword, which had been enhanced by the materials of monsters he killed with his comrades, which cut down every comrade of his.

The only thing he was allowed was to retain his sanity, he could neither cry at the death of his comrades, neither wail out loud.

The woman was watching it while laughing and rolling.

「Now, you can also die, if possible in a flashy way, so that lots of blood gushes out」

How much time had passed, he didn't know, but finally the torture of this

living hell was finally nearing its end.

After all, the people left in the place are only him and the woman, now there was no more comrades he had to kill.

No, actually there was one, an opponent he needed to kill, an enemy who should be killed.

Before he knew it, his body had regained the freedom.

Now then, only one thing was needed to be done.

「Huh? What, time's up? Shit, this is too much tiresome stuff, don't cause me any troubles」

It was his fastest and strongest attack ever.

The power was more than enough to kill this woman who looked like a normal frail human.

However, the girl wasn't a human; rather a 'monster' wearing human's skin.

「How is it, getting killed by your own weapon?」

To sum it up, abominable.

Before he knew it, having his heart pierced, he was in the state of near death, without even having the power to speak that word.

Hence, the things left behind were his will, the remains of his soul with the malice and hatred etched on it.

He was killed, but still can't forgive it, He can't forgive this loss, he can't forgive this woman who played with them, he can't allow himself to die just like this.

I hate her, I will kill her, I will kill this woman, even if I die—

The blade of Evil Eater ate even the thoughts filled with hatred.

He died, but his grudge, was still residing in the fanged sword he had swinging for years, with a new intention.

Intention called as『Curse』.

.

.

After swinging for some times, I put the『Fang Sword「Evil Eater」』, no, now called as『Hungry Wolf Sword「Evil Eater」』in the Dimension.

「What happened? Did you happen to see something?」

The voice calling me from behind was of Fiona.

She was the usual witch costume today.

「Yeah, I just looked into the worst memories ever.....」

It was fragmentary, but I can guess it completely, or was made to guess.

While heaving a long sigh, I sat down in the lawn of the inn.

「I see」

I'm grateful for her words not asking any explanation, and I too am in not any situation to explain that scene which can cause the blood to boil with anger.

I realized it right now, but my face and body is smeared with sweat. Controlling a Cursed weapon, this was the first time I had difficulty to this extent.

In terms of curse it was almost the same as『Cursed Hatchet「Tsuji giri」』, but the backstory of it was related to me, and more than anything, the ability of Evil Eater to eat the magic, increased the difficulty level for blackening.

Even though, like this I am able to use it to 'some extent'.

If I hadn't controlled it at all, then it would've have eaten the magical power creating the dimension and destroyed the magic.

For now, the『Hungry Wolf Sword「Evil Eater」』is being quiet, so it means that the blackening succeeded.

Or maybe Vulcan is helping me while saying『What a useless leader』.

Or is it me being too sentimental for thinking this.

Curse is different from the consciousness of the person themselves, grudge and hatred is one form of the condensed pent-up resentment of a human

being. Nothing more.

Like good and evil, instinct and reasoning, the heart of person is different from the soul.

Though knowing through reasoning, I cannot help but think about that hearty werewolf.

「You seem pretty tired, if it's too much to handle, then wasn't it a good idea to sell it?」

「No, it's fine, I can somewhat use it」

In the first place, there is a reason why I am holding the-now-cursed 『Hungry Wolf Sword』 「Evil Eater」 』.

The serial killer attacking women recently in Spada had bounty set upon him.

There exist quests within the urban areas, for capturing serious criminals, in truth there were some adventurers who after Joto.

In my case, though unintentionally, he had turned into a corpse, but as a result he was caught.

Also, if an adventurer captures the criminal, they have the right to ownership of all things in possession of the killer along with the reward.

In other words, just think of treating a criminal as monster.

And, both me and Fiona were adventurers, so the right existed for us too, and we got the right to ownership of the murder weapon 『Hungry Wolf Sword』 「Evil Eater」 』.

It's normal to sell of a cursed weapon immediately, but I can control the Cursed Weapons, and I couldn't let go off Vulcan's sword.

Well surely I had to go through trouble for getting the ownership of a murder weapon with shady background history.

「This is a curse, but also his will, then I, who has lived from the battle, should avenge for him」

「Indeed」

Face of Fiona, who said that while nodding, was still sleepy and expressionless.

For that time, she has already apologized lots of times「At that time I lost composure, I'm really very much sorry」. So I'm not touching that subject anymore.

I don't even want to remember that cold and dead atmosphere around her at that time.

「Well then, shall we go on the quest」

3 days have passed since then, today is 16th of Red Flame Month.

Lily's wing is now healed, so our adventurer work restarts from today.

「After the breakfast, right」

「You're right」

After getting up from lawn, I start heading back into the inn, thinking it's about time Lily comes down for breakfast.

Then, Fiona, without making any sound, came besides me as if cuddling me.

It seems like since 3 days ago, every time we walk our distances further decrease, is that imagination?

「What happened Kurono-san? Your eyes seemed like wanting to say something」

「No, nothing, don't worry about it」

The silver ring in Fiona's left ring finger just makes me think of a engagement ring, and makes me over-conscious about it.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Finally got my favorite『Evil Eater』!

Volume 14 will end with next chapter.

With the love triangle formation in the previous chapters, I have gotten many comments. Everyone thank you for that. As expected, Yandere are the Best!

Chapter 229 - The Two Strongholds

Today was 16th of Red Flame Month, exactly 1 month and 10 days had passed since the day Alsace Village was occupied.

This much time would be said impossible to make this village into a stronghold, but looks like for the ever-so-energetic Crusaders nothing was impossible.

「The establishment of Alsace Fort is going all well, right?」

The Sumprime Commander of Crusaders, 7th Apostle Sariel let out those words upon surveying the rural farm village changing slowly by slowly into a place fit for the stationing of Crusaders.

The Alsace Mura with a terrain like a small island stuffed between two rivers, now had strong bridges made crossing the east and west rivers, they both were entrance and exit. The cornerstone of defense, the stone wall too was almost more than half done.

Sariel, currently had visited for the inspection on the progress of Alsace Stronghold which would become the place in the frontlines when invading Spada.

「After Bishop Gregorios gave the land of Alsace to Earl Belgent, I had heard the new additions to the buildings was made, but never had I thought the construction would progress on this large scale. The nobles sure are quite influential」[1. I need help with this one. Look below]

The aide Archbishop Liuchrome, standing behind like a valet, replied to Sariel's words.

In those words somewhat sarcasm was mixed in, but Sariel could only take the meaning of those words as stated.

Or it may be things like the dark informations of Crusaders, might be irrelevant to her after getting a body not of a human.

That sort of Aloof atmosphere was gushing out of Sariel, who was watching the construction in an unimpressed manner.

But that is totally other's thoughts, in truth her mind was thinking about something else.

(Kurono Mao commanded the Demons and fought here)

Because the construction was going on, the traces of that fight are already lost. On the front now stood a really tough and strong stone wall completely different from the weak and frail wall of trees and barbed wire. The Guild in which demons resided, i.e The Blackbox, had already been destroyed and a storehouse to store provisions had been established there.

Even with the high perception of Apostles, one cannot even find traces that Kurono used black magical energy here.

At most the magic from mages, who trying to put a barrier on the protective wall, and golems helping in civil work was floating in the surroundings.

(The place I will fight him can be here or—-)

Sariel moved her deep crimson eyes. In those eyes reflected, the large joint mountains, the magnificent Galahad Mountain Range.

(—Galahad Stronghold in those mountains)

Seeing it from Alsace Village with naked eyes isn't possible, however, Sariel certainly 'saw' it, that castle of steel within the mountains.

.

In the Galahad Mountain Range extending across North and South, exists a point where the mountains are stopped as if a giant from legends pruned there.

That point which even a normal person can cross just by walking was the impregnable Galahad Stronghold, which Spada boasted of.

In that place which almost seems like ravine, were enshrined solid peerless castle walls covering from one end of the ravine to other end while being covered by rocks, steel and barrier.

This vertically standing black castle walls had an overwhelming appearance of a damn, the soldiers of Deadalus, or soldiers from even before had felt despair and resignation in front of these walls.

Above the great walls of Spada, which have protected the mountain road of Galahad Mountain since the founding of Spada, stood a single man.

His age can be said to be in prime of life, he had sharp eyes and was frowning his somewhat large brows, whilst showing a grim expression.

「Crusaders, eh—-」

Against the strong mountain winds, the man's long fiery red hair fluttered,

looking just like the mane of a lion.

Against the strong winds which might even shake a grown-up man, this man with a robust large build didn't even budge as if his feet had grown roots from them into the stones.

While crossing his two burly arms with toned muscles, the man looked into far distance with his glittering golden eyes.

「—I can agree to it if 'that white one' was the one who defeated Dragon King Gaevinal」

Under his eyes spread out the only road in the mountain, the mountain forest covered with dark green trees, and the horizon in far distance.

There was nothing other than magnificent nature which could be seen, but the 'white one' the man said, he certainly did 'see it'.

「'Ey, pops, don't ya start loitering 'ere and there on your own」

At that moment, a voice came from behind the man.

Upon turning back, there stood a man with golden eyes red hair, in the formal uniform of Spada Army.

Looking at those facial features and colors, even without telling their relationship one can easily guess they are father and son.

「Aik, don't make noise」

「'Ell no! If the damn king goes poof from the place he needs to be, ofcourse 'm gonna make noise, lots of noise! I has been finking(thinking) this from childhood, but ain't you got too much freedom, even I have but not to your extent for just running anywhere」

The sullenly silent father still had that grim expression, but in truth his son hit the weak nerve of his.

「But.....」

「Yeah yeah blah blah, don't wanna hear your excuses. Currently I'm the vice-captain of Spada Army's 1st Squad『Brave Heart』, so I'm here to WARN you not to LOITER 'ere and there 'gian」

「Sorry」

「Good to hear that」

The handsome man with the same-everything the man looked like in young days, stood besdies his father and looked in the same direction as him from the Galahad Stronghold.

「So, did you find out anything?」

「Yeah, most probably a war would come」

On his fathers comment he revealed a dumbfounded expression.

「Didn't we send the envoy just recently」

「Not like he's gonna come back」

On that remark, he sighed as if giving up and then opened up his mouth.

「It would be good if you could use that intuition in politics, but your intuitions like this are never wrong, you know that pops, don't ya.....」

Destruction of Daedalus, the appearance of mysterious army of human who appeared out of nowhere and call themselves Crusaders.

Though they know, Crusaders came from Arc Continent existing on the other side of the ocean, but everything else about them is still a mystery.

Let it be ally or foe, everything should start from talks, hence they sent a envoy for discussions, but if believing the man's words, looks like the negotiations would fail big this time.

「Wil handed me the letter, it can't be a coincidence」

「Yeah, he wrote something like Crusaders are a big bad alarm or something. Seriously, he's still a student, why is he sniffing around in things too troublesome like this--」

I give up, as if saying that he fixed his hair, which was still fluttering in hair, and continued his words.

「--But, Wil has got different brains compared to 'us'. Trusting him is much easier than some government official, so if he is seriously saying that, means it must be the truth」

「Yeah」

While remembering that face of his other child with wisdom and a habit of daydreaming, the father gave his answer.

「We need to prepare for the war, let's head back」

「Roger, King Majesty」

The two, father and son, turned back and left the place.

The father's name is, Leonhart Tristan Spada, the current King of Spada with another name of『Sword King』.

The son's name is, Aisenhart Tristan Spada, the eldest son of the king and the person in the first place for the right to inherit the crown.

The person who sensed the upcoming war the first, was strangely, the King of Spada.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The reappearance of Sariel, and the entry of Leonhart, whose name only was coming out ever since Volume 3.

Looks like the father and brother already trusted Wil.

Well then, with this Volume 14 ends. From the next Volume, School Volume (?) is going to start. Please look forward to it!